THE LAUREATES



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"IN SPRING, SHE GATHERED BLOSSOMS FOR THE STILL."
—*Page* 29.

The Laureates of England

Ben Jonson to William Wordsworth

WITH SELECTIONS FROM THEIR WORKS AND AN INTRODUCTION DEALING WITH THE ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENGLISH LAUREATESHIP

BY

Kenyon West

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VIGNETTE EDITION. WITH NUMEROUS NEW ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

Frederick C. Gordon



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These brief sketches of the

POETS LAUREATE OF ENGLAND

are dedicated, by permission, to

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

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THE LAUREATES OF ENGLAND

BEN JONSON—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

INTRODUCTION.

ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENGLISH LAUREATESHIP.

I.

WERE our judgment of the poets laureate of England to be based upon the current opinion of them and their work in literature, we should be inclined to consider that it was their great misfortune not only to be poets laureate, but that fate imposed upon them any compulsion to be poets at all. Since the death of Tennyson more attention has been paid to the past history and to the probable future of the English Laureateship than ever before. The explanations of the origin of this important office which have been given have, however, been conflicting, and much confusion has been thrown into the discussion. But upon one point the majority of those who have written about the poets laureate agree, and that is in sounding a note of disparagement in regard both to the office and those who have held it; if they praise at all, the praise is of such a nature as to be in itself a condemnation.

History has undoubtedly given these critics a certain basis for the severity of their remarks. The solitary office in England, to be held professedly by no one but a poet, had often been given to sycophants, time servers, and favourites of corrupt courts, who had little poetical genius to recommend them. As late as 1816 one of Robert Southey's friends advised him to rest satisfied with the safe obscurity of his predecessors. "A poet laureate," he said, "is naturally a ridiculous personage; the laurel which the monarch gives has nothing in common with that bestowed by the Muses, and the warrant is of no authority in the court of Apollo." But Southey felt, and rightly too, that, though the muse of men like Tate or Eusden was indeed commonplace, that of some of the other laureates had proved herself of lofty lineage; his own muse, he said, being a dignified and high-born dame who guarded his laurels in the grove on the mountain-side where dwelt his winged horse.

What these laureates have suffered at the hands of the critics of the present time is not to be compared to the abuse which was lavished upon them by their contemporaries. The literary history of England is full of the records of the burlesques, the lampoons, the coarse wit and satire, which have been directed against any poet who has struggled into notice, and won distinction above his fellows. The poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were especially exposed to these satirical assaults.

The prevailing opinion is not always the true or the just one, though, of course, it has a measure of truth and of justice as its foundation. The prevailing opinion in regard to these poets of England who were crowned with the laurel is more often based upon the satires and lampoons of which they were the occasion, than upon the nature of their own poetical work. People read Dryden and Pope instead of Shadwell and Cibber; but the Colley Cibber of the "Dunciad," and the Thomas Shadwell of "Mac Flecknoe" are not the true Cibber and the true Shadwell. The laureates have been more assailed by satire than other poets, and this not because they were necessarily poor poets, but because their very position excited envy. Though men like Gray and Scott refused the appointment of the Laureateship, the position was often eagerly sought. Especially about the time of Davenant, poets vied with one another for preference; some were even bold enough to call themselves laureates when they had no cause whatever to assume the title. After the death of Eusden, when the unfortunate Richard Savage failed to receive the appointment for which he sued with so much servility, he called himself the volunteer laureate, and in that capacity wrote a number of odes for the queen, services which she liberally rewarded.

II.

When the origin and true significance of the Laureateship are fully understood, there seems less disposition on the part of the student of literature to disparage the achievement of those men upon whom the honour was bestowed.

Being appointed a poet laureate did not always in the past, nor would it at the present time, imply that such a poet was greater than his fellows. To suppose this is to misapprehend the nature of the office. It must always be remembered that the Laureateship was a court appointment, an office in the gift of the Government. Hence the laureate was a court poet, and one who of necessity must be in sympathy with the monarch

and all monarchical measures. That this misapprehension of the Laureateship is very common is proved by the numerous newspaper remarks upon the subject. A recent writer, in expressing the usual cant about these laureates being such sorry poets, says, "Think of Southey being laureate while Byron was alive!" We might retort, "Think of Byron, the poet of revolution, writing a 'Vision of Judgment,' in which an infamous king was canonised; or of Byron being in a position where odes like Southey's on the negotiations with Bonaparte, or the visits of the king to Ireland and Scotland, were expected!"

Shelley and Byron were undoubtedly greater poets than Southey; but to have seen them made court poets would have been one of the strangest things that could ever occur in the history of English poetry!

III.

It is true that from the era of Ben Jonson to that of Southey, few of these poets laureate sought to penetrate far into the meaning of human life; they were neither impressed by its mystery, nor did they sound the depths of its joy and its pain. They did not "utter wisdom from the central deep," nor possess that which Bodenstedt describes as the philosophy which,

> "Auf stolzen Schwinge
> Sucht wie ein Adler zum Lichte zu dringen,
> Forscht nach dem Urgrund von allen Dingen."

Their work, therefore, lacks power and loftiness as well as depth, and it is without moral strength and dignity.

The cause of this is not far to seek. When Elizabeth was well established upon the throne of England, and in the full enjoyment of her power, a new spirit became evident in literature, which caused her reign to be considered the most glorious in English history. This outburst of the national mind was ardent and eager, original and creative. This eagle-like spirit of genius reached the height of its flight in the years between 1603 and 1626, in the reign of Elizabeth's successor. In the reign of Charles I., however, a marked change began to manifest itself—the glory had begun to wane. Ben Jonson, the first poet to be honoured by the office of the Laureateship as it now is understood, did his best work amid the influences which made the Elizabethan age so great.

It was because of his eminent services to literature that in 1616—some authorities say 1619—James I. granted to Ben Jon-

son letters patent making him poet laureate. Charles I. had been king five years when he reconsidered this appointment of his father. He issued new letters patent to Ben Jonson, which for the first time made the Laureateship a permanent institution.

But after this the glory of the "Elizabethan Age" not only began to wane, but the Laureateship came to be considered not only a reward for literary services, but a gift dependent largely upon court patronage.

From the death of Jonson in 1637 to the death of Henry James Pye in 1813, when Southey succeeded him, one hundred and seventy-six years passed. In that period the Stuarts lost the throne of England. During the Commonwealth the laureate, Sir Willam Davenant, was deposed. When the Restoration came English poetry received a blow from which it took over a hundred years to recover, The creative age of Shakespeare was past and gone. The influence of French taste and of French codes of morality, of foreign standards of art, was felt everywhere. Literature became artificial and concerned itself with externals, and there was a moral blight upon the drama.

The Augustan age of Anne, which gave us Pope and Swift and all that brilliant circle, though it was rich in prose, produced no great inspired natural poet. Inspiration, naturalness, and a high poetic ideal seem to have vanished until Cowper and Burns appeared.

It is therefore not surprising that during these hundred and seventy-six years, when there were ten poets laureate, there should be among the number no supremely great poet. Among the ten, Dryden stands first, and next to him, Warton. But Dryden, with all his facile skill, his command of the resources of language, and his brilliant wit, produced no poem which was the outcome of an exalted mood. His work lacked dignity and moral strength, and was wholly without those finer influences which tend to inspire and elevate humanity. Warton, noble poet as he was, stood halfway between the school that was going out and the school that was coming in. Cowper and Burns appeared only a few years before Warton died, and Wordsworth published nothing till after Warton's death. Warton scarcely felt the force of the tide which was bearing English poetry on to new regions of thought. He was great compared to the men who immediately preceded him, but he belonged to an artificial school, and his art felt the influence of its limitations.

For twenty-three years Henry James Pye wore the wreath of laurel. During that time English poetry was being brought back to nature by the inspired work of Wordsworth and his great contemporaries, but the new revelation which had come to them, the new spirit which was animating English poetry,

touched the laureate so lightly that he might just as well have been living in the age of Anne as in that of George III.

And so, from the death of Jonson to the accession of Southey, none of these laureates could be called poets of the highest order. They were not only the creatures of their age, but their position as court poets called for no grand heroic effort in verse. The monarchs, whom it was their duty to extol and flatter, had few qualities to inspire genuine enthusiasm. Charles I., whose soul, Ben Jonson said, lived in an alley; Charles II., false and corrupt at heart; James II., who tried so hard to subvert the liberties of the nation; William III., who cared nothing for English poetry or poets; Anne, under the rule of her favourites, with little regard for the brilliant writers who made her reign illustrious. Then came the Georges. Is it any wonder that when the poor laureates were obliged to celebrate the birthdays of these ignoble sovereigns by odes and lyrics, that the divine afflatus failed? In other fields of literature these laureates sometimes did valuable work, especially in the domain of the drama, but as far as their strictly official poems, which their position made compulsory, are concerned, they cannot be said to deserve high praise.

IV.

In many accounts of the Laureateship, there is not sufficient distinction maintained between those poets whose claim to the title was shadowy and intangible, and those who had authentic right to the honour. Some authorities, in speaking of Chaucer, or Skelton, or Spenser as laureates, often neglect to explain just how they came to be so called.

All history is founded on tradition; mists and clouds veil the far past, and it is only by inference and reasoning from analogy that definite knowledge is gained. Much confusion prevails, and probably will ever prevail, in regard to the origins of various customs and institutions. Many of them have

> "Broadened slowly down
> From precedent to precedent."

The idea of the Laureateship appears to have assumed form gradually; but this much is certain, that, as it now exists, it began with Ben Jonson. It was not until 1630 that it became a definite and permanent institution. It was then that Charles I. ratified the appointment which had been conferred upon Jonson by James I. The annual pension which had been given before was increased to one hundred pounds, and a butt of wine

from the king's cellars. When this great poet and dramatist was thus formally recognised as an officer of the royal household, he undoubtedly occupied the first place in the world of letters.

Before Ben Jonson's time, however, there were court poets who sang the praises of their sovereigns, who celebrated in heroic verse the victories which exalted the nation, and who were rewarded for their services with pensions and emoluments.

It had been from very early times the custom in Italy, Germany, and even Spain, to crown certain poets who were considered pre-eminent. The custom probably originated in the mythologic period. If some writers wish to call Apollo the first laureate they may do so; though he might possibly wish to be in better company than among the laureates of the Augustan age of England. Better to place him among those of the Augustan age of Rome, for Vergil and Horace were both crowned with the laurel wreath.

It had been the custom among the ancient Greeks to crown their poets with a wreath symbolical of both appreciation and reward. The Romans imitated the Greeks of course in this as in so many other things. The universities of the Middle Ages must in their turn have derived their custom of laureation from the well-known crowning of Petrarch by the Roman senate. Many universities on the Continent blended with the poetic distinction a reference to theology quite characteristic of the age.

Thus in the early times there were many poets laureate. They were not, however, necessarily court poets.

Warton asserts that the universities conferred the honour as a degree upon those graduates who excelled in rhetoric and Latin versification. A wreath of laurel was placed upon their heads, and, if they were, at the same time, licensed to be teachers of boys, they were publicly presented with a rod and ferrule.

Warton describes several interesting instances of these degrees in versification being conferred at Oxford. One student received the laurel on condition that he compose a Latin comedy and one hundred Latin verses in praise of the university. We see in this perhaps the beginning of the custom of linking to the honour of laureation certain conditions which made it somewhat like a mercantile transaction.

Caxton, in a work printed in 1490, mentions "Mayster John Skelton, late created poete laureate in the university of Oxenford." Skelton had been crowned with the laurel probably in 1489, and four years after he was permitted to wear the same badge also at Cambridge. This is the cause of Skelton's signing himself "Poeta Skelton Laureatus."

There seems to be considerable uncertainty in regard to the origin of the term poet laureate as applied to a member of the royal household of England.

The custom must gradually have arisen for English monarchs to choose from among these laureates of the university one who would be present at court, and would on stated occasions sing the praises of his country and his king. Many times this poet was called simply king's versifier, and there are a few instances on record of this king's versifier being chosen when he had never received from Oxford any laureate degree; though, as a rule, the appointment was conferred because the recipient had already received the laurel crown for skill in Latin versification. It was customary also for the court poets to write in Latin, as the English language was regarded with universal contempt. Warton is of the opinion that the royal laureate did not begin to write in English till the Reformation had begun to diminish the veneration for Latin.

An institution, somewhat like the Laureateship, calculated to encourage literature and develop the national language, is traced to the early reign of Henry III.—when a yearly salary of one hundred shillings was given to Henry d'Avranches, and he has therefore been called the pioneer laureate; but this is a mere tradition. "Morbid credulity can go no farther back than to the Father of English Poetry."

Chaucer, by his close relationship to John of Gaunt, to whose influence he owed some official appointments, has often been styled poet laureate to Edward IV., but there is no evidence whatever that he had any right to the title. He was simply a great poet who was often at court, and who received certain rewards for definite political, not poetical, services.

After Richard II. met Gower rowing on the Thames, and asked him straightway to book some new thing, Gower *called himself the king's* laureate; but Skelton, while praising both Gower and Chaucer, said "they wanted nothing but the Lawrell." We hear of John Kay, a court poet who lived over fifty years later than Gower, addressing himself to Edward IV. as "hys humble poet laureate." But the title was wholly self-given. Henry VII. is said to have granted to Andrew Bernard, poet laureate, a small salary till he should obtain some employment which would insure him the same sum; but there is nothing very permanent in this.

The court jester Scogan called himself laureate, but his claim cannot be sustained.

Skelton aspired to be court poet as well as the laureate of Oxford. By his keen and pungent satire he must have been a power in helping on the Reformation. He was connected by the whole scope of his literary purpose with the reign of Henry VIII., and in that reign the idea of religious liberty became manifest with irresistible power.

The portrait of a great poet—the immortal Spenser—has

been placed recently in a periodical beside that of Chaucer, and both are called poets laureate of the past; but there is no evidence whatever to justify the statement. Edmund Spenser was pensioned by Queen Elizabeth, but there are even doubts whether this pension was paid more than once. When Southey was appointed laureate he wished to magnify his office, and he thereupon wrote some poetry about it, and by poetic license spoke of that

> Wreath which in Eliza's golden days
> My master, dear, divinest Spenser wore;

but in plain prose Southey admitted that none of the poets of whom he sang had, with the exception of Ben Jonson, any right to the title of laureate. It was given to them, he says, not as holding the office, but as a mark of honour to which they were entitled. Among these volunteer laureates whom Southey thus praised were Samuel Daniel and Michael Drayton. Daniel held important posts at court, and was much beloved there; but when the courtiers of James I. began to concern themselves with the production of the masques which were becoming so popular, it was considered that Ben Jonson was the poet best fitted to be responsible for their management. Daniel therefore retired from the court. Drayton's portrait has come down to us, his brow encircled by the wreath of laurel. This is owing to the poet's secret wish, and was also the tribute of his friends.

Drayton's sonnets rank high in the language, but though he may have deserved the laurel it was never his by royal appointment.

We find in every case that, prior to the era of Ben Jonson, the claims of any poet to the title of laureate cannot be sustained, unless that poet had received the honour from the University of Oxford.



BEN JONSON.

THE LAUREATES.

BEN JONSON.

FIRST POET LAUREATE WITH LETTERS PATENT.

Born in London in 1573. Made court poet to James I. in 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death. This appointment confirmed in 1630, and the Laureateship made permanent. Died in 1637.

(Reigns of James I. and Charles I.)

THOUGH the fame of Ben Jonson has been affected by certain misrepresentations of his character, both literary and personal, notably by the betrayal of trust of which Drummond of Hawthornden was guilty, the words which have been applied to Dryden can much more appropriately be applied to him:

"He wrestles with and conquers time."

By his strong creative genius and his healthful vigour, he was an honour not only to the office he held, but to English literature. The fact that he was the first laureate has added little to his fame. His name has lived because he was a man of colossal mental stature, who by his powerful personality made a deep impression upon his age, and because as a great dramatist and as a lyric poet his work forms a part of

"Those melodious bursts which fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still."

Many poets have acknowledged their indebtedness to him. Milton himself so admired him that some of his poems are directly modelled upon his. Shadwell openly took him as his master in the dramatic art. In Keats' best work we find traces of the stately majesty and the perfect workmanship of some of Jonson's lines. Even Tennyson has felt the influence of this great and original thinker.

Ben Jonson's work, however, will be found to be full of

defects. It is unequal. Some of it is imitative of the classics, and much of it is heavy and gloomy. But in his lighter moods his touch is exquisite, his lyrical genius enchanting. His elegies are perhaps as fine as any in the language; and his wide and profound learning give to his dramatic productions a classical elegance often lacking in those of his contemporaries. Austin and Ralph very justly call attention to the fact that Ben Jonson is no exception to the rule that clear and strong utterance is one of the chief characteristics of genius, and that great poets have been good prose writers. "The destruction of his prose manuscripts is to be much regretted; what are left show erudite criticism and severity of judgment. Notes on books and on life written in a concise and pregnant style remind us of Bacon's Essays."

Ben Jonson's life was one of desperate struggle and of many sorrows as well as glorious success. He was of noble family, his grandfather having been a man of rank and fortune in the service of Henry VIII. His father, however, suffered persecution in the reign of Bloody Mary, and it was only at her death that he was liberated from prison. He took orders soon after the accession of Elizabeth, but death came to him just a month before the birth of his famous son.

Little is known of Ben's childhood, except that he was brave and courageous at school, a good student, a good fighter, a good hater, as well as an ardent lover. How well he loved his teacher at Westminster school where his boyhood was passed is shown by the famous dedication of his works to the great Camden.

The youth of the poet was full of vicissitude. Disdaining bricklaying, a trade thrust upon him probably by his stepfather, he entered Cambridge at the age of sixteen. But he soon found his means totally inadequate to his remaining at the university, and so he volunteered into the army. He performed many heroic deeds in the Low Countries; once engaging in single combat, when he slew his opponent, seized his arms, and carried them away in full view of both armies. This achievement at the age of eighteen was no ignoble one. But the trade of arms as well as that of the artisan failed to satisfy the restless temperament of Ben Jonson. He returned to England and found an outlet for his intellectual energy as well as a means of support, upon the stage. He appeared first in a small playhouse called the Green Curtain. At the outset of his career, however, a misfortune overwhelmed him which coloured all his future life. A quarrel with a fellow-actor resulted in a duel, in which Ben Jonson killed his opponent. Overcome with remorse for the deed, and himself wounded painfully, he was thrown into prison and, as he says, brought near to the

gallows. The prisons of that time were sorry places; Jonson suffered acutely both in body and in spirit. It is hinted by some of his biographers that during this period of suffering no solace was offered him from the clergymen of his own church. Popish priests, however, sought him out and under their influence the forlorn youth forsook the faith for which his father had undergone such cruel persecution. Years after, Jonson returned to the church his father had loved so well. Both apostasy and reconversion were undoubtedly sincere, and whatever sins and errors stained the life-record of this headstrong, impetuous thinker, he never gave up his faith in God. Though Jonson has won his fame principally as a dramatist, he wrote many beautiful religious poems, which reveal a thoughtful, sincere, and devoted spirit.

Released at length from prison, Jonson reassumed the profession of the stage, and at the age of twenty, with no settled income, he showed his impulsive disposition by plunging into matrimony. The woman he married had domestic tastes and was brave and courageous in enduring the privations of their early life together. A hard time they had of it too. At first Jonson was very poor and quite unknown; then, as his genius found recognition and he was rewarded with court honours, he, who was always careless in the use of money, became recklessly extravagant. The poor wife could never have had either a very happy or serene life. That for five years she lived apart from her husband is not surprising. Yet Jonson's heart was tender and affectionate and he was a loving father.

Jonson was never a good actor, and at first his principal occupation was recasting old plays. But by the writing of his drama, "Every Man in his Humour," he placed himself among the great dramatists of his time. He showed that he had found his true life-work, and from the commencement of the new century he had a succession of triumphs.

Jonson's great strength was comedy, but he wrote two tragedies which were full of power and dignity. His comedies show versatility, breadth of treatment, and overflowing wit. His wide knowledge of life led him to analyse many base and contemptible passions, and yet he sought to elevate his readers, and his efforts to instruct as well as to elevate led him often to be accused of pedantry.

Jonson's high rank in the world of letters rests not only upon his dramas, but upon those masques which were so popular among the courtiers of James I. In his plays he does not show the creative strength or the imaginative insight of Shakespeare. His personages have not the living, vital force nor the finer and more subtle distinctions of character. To use his own phrase, he often delineated humours rather than persons.

This analysis of minute eccentricities and of striking whims and propensities makes Ben Jonson's personages often too abstract—types rather than individuals. The accentuation of one dominant passion is impressive and original, but it is not natural. In many plays Jonson satirised the vices and affectations of the time. He wished honestly enough to reform his age, and unlike Dryden he pandered to no prevailing taste; he spoke out his convictions fearlessly—careless whether he won worldly advancement or general scorn. His language of invective is sharp, nervous, and forcible—in all his work there is a mighty egotism as well as a mighty and manly strength. The man's individuality is all pervasive.

It is in his lovely masques that the true poetic genius of Ben Jonson is most apparent. Seldom tender or pathetic in his plays, he is both in the masques, and they have, also, a lyrical charm most entrancing.

Jonson's days were spent in laborious study, winning distinction for his great learning, and his nights were usually spent in the indulgence of his convivial habits at the Mermaid Club. This club, made up of the most famous wits and poets, was of course frequented by Shakespeare, Selden, Raleigh, Beaumont, Fletcher, and the rest. Many a good time must these friends have had together.

Keats, whose genius was in such thorough sympathy with these old Elizabethans, wrote:

"Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can."

Ben Jonson's ardent, tempestuous nature exposed him to many rude shocks of fate: he had many bitter quarrels with his fellow-dramatists, but he many times showed fine qualities of magnanimity and justice, and he was often forgiving.

About the time of Shakespeare's death Jonson brought out a complete edition of his own plays, and James I. honoured him by conferring upon him a pension and the office of poet to his court. Soon after this he travelled both in Scotland and on the Continent, meeting many notable people and winning everywhere both friends and enemies. At the death of the king in 1625, Jonson began to suffer a decline in court favour. His

extravagance had been so great that in spite of his pension and the many costly gifts from friends at court, he was always in want, and his drinking habits brought with them their inevitable punishment—disease and suffering.

Charles I. had been five years on the throne before he paid much attention to his father's favourite poet. But when Jonson appealed to him for help, he quickly responded with a large gift. Then, desirous of paying some tribute to literature, and to confer distinction upon his own reign, he made the Laureateship permanent—an office founded upon letters patent, with an annual salary of a hundred pounds; and in deference to Jonson's well-known tastes, he added to this salary a butt of Canary wine. The laureate was so fond of this particular wine that his boon companions often called him the canary bird. Suckling, in his famous burlesque, "The Session of the Poets," where he represents the foremost wits of the day as having a contest for the laurel, says:

> "The first that broke silence was good old Ben,
> Prepared with Canary wine,
> And he told them plainly he deserved the bays."

This preparation with Canary wine, not to mention stronger potations, had altered Jonson's personal appearance greatly. Thin and pale in youth, he soon became stout, his face flushed and unattractive. A lady of the court described him once to someone who had likened him to the poet Horace: "That same Horace of yours has a most ungodly face, by my fan! It looks for all the world like a russet apple when 'tis bruised." And, though we must take with a liberal dose of salt all that Drummond said of his guest, Drummond said that drink was the element in which Ben Jonson lived.

Jonson's last days were sad and lonely. His wife and all his children had long since died; palsy had attacked him; he was poor and weak, and in great suffering. And yet all his finest poetic qualities united in the production of his pastoral play, "The Sad Shepherd, or The Tale of Robin Hood." We can trace echoes of this exquisite poem in many of the lyrics of our own time. But death came to Ben Jonson before he could finish this beautiful swan song.

In the Poet's Corner of the great Abbey he was laid, and to the kind act of a stranger we owe that unique and wonderful epitaph: "O rare Ben Jonson!"

SELECTIONS FROM JONSON.

TO CELIA.

(*From "The Forest."*)

DRINK to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss within the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise,
Doth ask a drink divine:
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.
I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee,
As giving it a hope, that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon did'st only breathe,
And send'st it back to me:
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.

ON TRUTH.

TRUTH is the trial of itself,
And needs no other touch,
And purer than the purest gold
Refine it ne'er so much.

It is the life and light of love,
The sun that ever shineth,
And spirit of that special grace,
That faith and love defineth.

It is the warrant of the word,
That yields a scent so sweet,
As gives a power to faith to tread
All falsehood under feet.

HAPPINESS.

TRUE happiness consists not in the multitude of friends,
But in their worth and choice.

LINES.

(*From "The Sad Shepherd."*)

HERE she was wont to go! and here! and here!
Just where those daisies, pinks, and violets grow;
The world may find the spring in following her,
For other print her airy steps ne'er left.
Her treading would not bend a blade of grass,
Or shake the downy blow-ball from his stalk!
But like the soft west wind she shot along,
And where she went the flowers took thickest root,
As she had sowed them with her odorous foot.

LIFE AND DEATH.

THE ports of death are sins; of life, good deeds;
Through which our merit leads us to our meeds.
How wilful blind is he, then, that would stray,
And hath it in his powers to make his way.
This world death's region is, the other, life's;
And here, it should be one of our first strifes
So to front death as men might judge us past it;
For good men see but death, the wicked taste it.

THE PLEASURE OF HEAVEN.

THERE all the happy souls that ever were,
Shall meet with gladness in one theatre;
And each shall know there one another's face,
By beatific virtue of the place.
There shall the brother with the sister walk,
And sons and daughters with their parents talk;
But all of God; they still shall have to say,
But make him all in all their theme that day;
That happy day that never shall see night!
Where he will be all beauty to the sight;
Wine or delicious fruits unto the taste;
A music in the ears will ever last;

Unto the scent, a spicery or balm;
And to the touch, a flower, like soft as palm.
He will all glory, all perfection be,
God in the Union and the Trinity!
That holy, great, and glorious mystery,
Will there revealed be in majesty,
By light and comfort of spiritual grace;
The vision of our Saviour, face to face,
In his humanity! to hear him preach
The price of our redemption, and to teach,
Through his inherent righteousness in death,—
The safety of our souls and forfeit breath!

FANTASY.

(*From "The Vision of Delight."*)

BREAK, Fantasy, from thy cave of cloud,
And spread thy purple wings,
Now all thy figures are allowed,
And various shapes of things;
Create of airy forms a stream,
It must have blood, and naught of phlegm;
And though it be a waking dream,
Yet let it like an odour rise
To all the senses here,
And fall like sleep upon their eyes,
Or music in their ear.

A VISION OF BEAUTY.

IT was a beauty that I saw,—
So pure, so perfect, as the frame
Of all the universe were lame
To that one figure, could I draw,
Or give least line of it a law:
A skein of silk without a knot!
A fair march made without a halt!
A curious form without a fault!
A printed book without a blot!
All beauty!—and without a spot.



"BREAK, FANTASY, FROM THE CAVE OF CLOUD,
AND SPREAD THY PURPLE WINGS."—*Page* 8.

TRUTH.

(*From "Hymenæi, or the Solemnities of Masques and Barriers at the Marriage of the Earl of Essex, 1606."*)

UPON her head she wears a crown of stars,
Through which her Orient hair waves to her waist,
By which believing mortals hold her fast,
And in those golden cords are carried even,
Till with her breath she blows them up to heaven.
She wears a robe enchased with eagles' eyes,
To signify her sight in mysteries:
Upon each shoulder sits a milk-white dove,
And at her feet do coilly serpents move:
Her spacious arms do reach from east to west,
And you may see her heart shine through her breast.
Her right hand holds a sun with burning rays,
Her left a curious bunch of golden keys,
With which heaven's gates she locketh and displays.
A crystal mirror hangeth at her breast,
By which men's consciences are searched and drest,
On her coach-wheels Hypocrisy lies racked;
And squint-eyed Slander with Vainglory backed,
Her bright eyes burn to dust, in which shines Fate:
An angel ushers her triumphant gait,
Whilst with her fingers fans of stars she twists,
And with them beats back Error, clad in mists.
Eternal Unity behind her shines,
That fire and water, earth and air combines.
Her voice is like a trumpet loud and shrill,
Which bids all sounds in earth and heaven be still.

EPITAPH ON MY FIRST DAUGHTER.

HERE lies, to each her parents ruth,
Mary, the daughter of our youth;
Yet, all Heaven's gifts being Heaven's due,
It makes the father less to rue.
At six months' end, she parted hence
With safety of her innocence;
Whose soul Heaven's Queen—whose name she bears—
In comfort of her mother's tears,
Hath placed among her virgin train:
Where, while that severed doth remain,
This grave partakes the fleshly birth,
Which cover lightly, gentle earth.

EPITAPH ON ELIZABETH L. H.

WOULDST thou hear what man can say
In a little? Reader, stay.

Underneath this stone doth lie
As much beauty as could die:
Which in life did harbour give
To more virtue than doth live.
If at all she had a fault,
Leave it buried in this vault.
One name was Elizabeth;
The other, let it sleep in death,
Fitter, where it died to tell,
Than that it lived at all. Farewell!

EPITAPH ON MASTER PHILIP GRAY.

(*From "Underwoods."*)

READER, stay;
And if I had no more to say
But "Here doth lie, till the last day,
All that is left of Philip Gray,"
It might thy patience richly pay:
For if such men as he could die,
What surety o' life have thou and I?

EPITAPH ON MARGARET RATCLIFFE.

MARBLE, weep! for thou dost cover
A dead beauty underneath thee,
Rich as nature could bequeath thee:
Grant, then, no rude hands remove her!
All the gazers on the skies
Read not in fair heaven's story
Expresser truth or truer glory
Than they might in her bright eyes.

Rare as wonder was her wit,
And, like nectar, overflowing;
Till Time, strong by her bestowing,
Conquer'd hath both life and it;

Life whose grief was out of fashion
In these times. Few so have rued
Fate in another. To conclude,—
For wit, feature, and true passion,
Earth! thou hast not such another.

SONG.

How near to good is what is fair,
Which we no sooner see,
But with the lines and outward air
Our senses taken be.
We wish to see it still, and prove
What ways we may deserve;
We court, we praise, we more than love,
We are not grieved to serve.

FAME.

Her house is all of echo made,
Where never dies the sound;
And as her brows the clouds invade,
Her feet do strike the ground.

ODE TO HIMSELF.

Where dost thou careless lie
Buried in ease and sloth?
Knowledge that sleeps, doth die;
And this security,
It is the common moth
That eats on wits and arts, and so destroys them both.

Are all the Aonian springs
Dried up? Lies Thespia waste?
Doth Clarius' harp want strings,
That not a nymph now sings?
Or droop they as disgraced,
To see their seats and bowers by chattering pies defaced?

If hence thy silence be,
As 'tis too just a cause,—
Let this thought quicken thee;
Minds that are great and free
Should not on fortune pause;
'Tis crown enough to virtue still, her own applause.

CHIVALRY.

THE house of Chivalry decayed,
Or rather ruined seems, her buildings laid
Flat with the Earth, that were the pride of Time;
Those obelisks and columns broke and down,
That strook the stars, and raised the British Crown
To be a Constellation.
When to the structure went more noble names
Than to the Ephesian Temple lost in flames,
When every stone was laid by virtuous hands.

SONG.

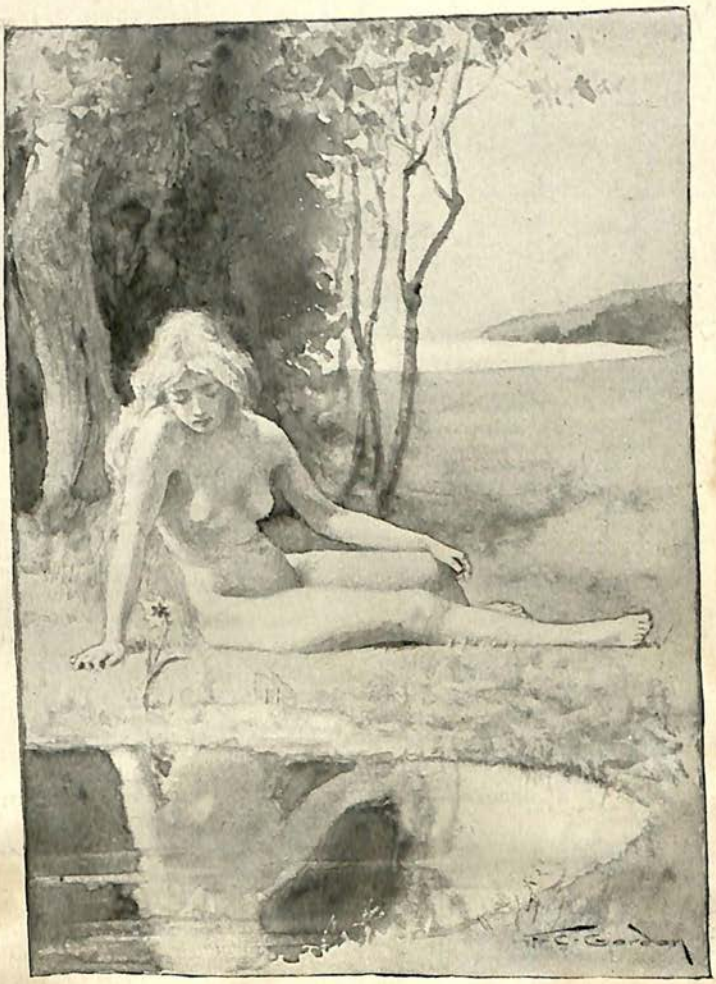
THE faery beam upon you,
And the stars to glister on you,
A moon of light
In the noon of night,
Till the fire-drake hath o'ergone you:
The wheel of Fortune guide you,
The boy with the bow beside you
Run aye in the way, till the bird of day
And the luckier lot betide you.

TRANSLATION OF COWLEY'S EPIGRAM ON FRANCIS DRAKE.

THE stars above will make thee known,
If man were silent here;
The sun himself cannot forget
His fellow-traveller.

NATURE.

HOW young and fresh am I to-night,
To see't kept day by so much light,
And twelve of my sons stand in their Maker's sight!
Help, wise Prometheus, something must be done,
To show they are the creatures of the sun.
That each to other
Is a brother,
And Nature here no stepdame, but a mother.
Come forth, come forth, prove all the numbers then,
That make perfection up, and may absolve you men,



"SLOW, SLOW, FRESH FOUNT, KEEP TIME WITH MY SALT TEARS: YET SLOWER, YET."—*Page* 13.

But show thy winding ways and arts,
Thy risings, and thy timely starts
Of stealing fire from ladies' eyes and hearts.
Those softer circles are the young man's heaven,
And there more orbs and planets are than seven.
To know whose motion
Were a notion
As worthy of youth's study, as devotion.
Come forth, come forth! prove all the time will gain,
For Nature bids the best, and never bade in vain.

ECHO'S LAMENT OF NARCISSUS.

(*From "Cynthia's Revels."*)

SLOW, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears:
Yet slower, yet; O faintly, gentle springs:
List to the heavy part the music bears,
Woe weeps out her division, when she sings.
Droop, herbs and flowers,
Fall, grief, in showers,
Our beauties are not ours:
O, I could still,
Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,
Drop, drop, drop, drop,
Since nature's pride is now a withered daffodil.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED MASTER, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, AND WHAT HE HATH LEFT US.

TO draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
While I confess thy writings to be such
As neither man nor muse can praise too much.
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these ways
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise;
For silliest ignorance on these would light,
Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right;
Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
The truth, but gropes, and urges all by chance;
Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
And think to ruin, where it seemed to raise.

But thou art proof against them, and, indeed,
Above the ill fortune of them, or need.
I therefore will begin: Soul of the age!
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!
My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
A little further off, to make thee room:
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still while thy book doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses,
I mean with great but disproportioned muses:
For if I thought my judgment were of years,
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
And tell how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
Or sporting Kyd or Marlowe's mighty line.
And though thou had small Latin and less Greek,
From thence to honour thee I will not seek
For names; but call forth thund'ring Æschylus,
Euripides, and Sophocles to us,
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
To live again, to hear thy buskin tread,
And shake a stage; or when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone for the comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to shew,
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury, to charm!
Nature herself was proud of his designs,
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and even so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;
But antiquated and deserted lie,
As they were not of Nature's family.
Yet must I not give Nature all; thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
For though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion; and, that he
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat—
Such as thine are—and strike the second heat
Upon the Muses' anvil; turn the same,

And himself with it, that he thinks to frame;
Or for the laurel he may gain a scorn;
For a good poet 's made as well as born.
And such wert thou! Look how the father's face
Lives in his issue; even so the race
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines
In his well turned and true filled lines:
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
As brandished at the eyes of ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our water yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere
Advanced, and made a constellation there!
Shine forth, thou Star of Poets, and with rage,
Or influence, chide, or cheer the drooping stage,
Which since thy flight from hence hath mourned like night,
And despairs day, but for thy volume's light.

HYMN TO DIANA.

QUEEN and Huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear, when day did close:
Bless us then with wishèd sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy shining crystal quiver;
Give unto the flying heart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,—
Goddess excellently bright.

THE TRUE GROWTH.

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night,—
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.

CHARIS' TRIUMPH.

See the chariot at hand here of Love,
Wherein my Lady rideth!
Each that draws is a swan or a dove,
And well the car Love guideth.
As she goes, all hearts do duty
Unto her beauty;
And enamoured do wish, so they might
But enjoy such a sight,
That they still were to run by her side,
Through swords, through seas, whither she would ride.

Do but look on her eyes, they do light
All that Love's world compriseth!
Do but look on her hair, it is bright
As Love's star when it riseth!
Do but mark, her forehead 's smoother
Than words that soothe her;
And from her arched brows, such a grace
Sheds itself through the face,
As alone their triumphs to the life
All the gain, all the good of the element's strife.

Have you seen but a bright lily grow
Before rude hands have touched it?
Have you marked but the fall o' the snow
Before the soil hath smutched it?
Have you felt the wool of beaver?
Or swan's down ever?
Or have smelt o' the bud o' the briar?
Or the nard in the fire?
Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
O so white,—O so soft,—O so sweet is she!



"HAVE YOU MARKED BUT THE FALL O' THE SNOW BEFORE THE SOIL HATH SMUTCHED IT?"—*Page* 16.

SONG.

(*A Translation from the Latin of Bonnefonius.*)

STILL to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powdered, still perfumed:
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found.
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all the adulteries of art:
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

A FRAGMENT.

BOAST not these titles of your ancestors,
Brave youths, they're their possessions, none of yours.
When your own virtues equalled have their names,
'Twill be but fair to lean upon their fames;
For they are strong supporters; but, till then
The greatest are but growing gentlemen.
It is a wretched thing to trust to reeds;
Which all men do, that urge not their own deeds
Up to their ancestors'; the river's side
By which you're planted, shows your fruit shall bide.
Hang all your rooms with one large pedigree;
'Tis virtue alone is true nobility:
Which virtue from your father, ripe, will fall;
Study illustrious him, and you have all.

ON THE PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE—1623.

THIS figure that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut,
Wherein the graver had a strife
With Nature, to outdo the life;
Oh, could he but have drawn his wit
As well in brass, as he has hit
His face, the print would then surpass
All that was ever writ in brass;
But since he cannot, reader, look
Not on his picture, but his book.

LINES FROM CATILINE.

It is, methinks, a morning full of fate,
It riseth slowly, as her sullen car
Had all the weights of sleep and death hung at it!
She is not rosy-fingered, but swollen black,
Her face is like a water turned to blood,
And her sick head is bound about with clouds,
As if she threatened night ere noon of day!
It does not look as it would have a hail,
Or health wis'd in it, as on other morns.

JEALOUSY.

(*From "Every Man in His Humour."*)

A NEW disease! I know not new or old,
But it may well be called poor mortal's plague;
For like a pestilence it doth infect
The houses of the brain. First it begins
Solely to work upon the phantasy,
Filling her seat with such pestiferous air
As soon corrupts the judgment; and from thence
Sends like contagion to the memory;
Still each to other giving the infection,
Which as a subtle vapour spreads itself
Confusedly through every sensitive part,
Till not a thought or motion in the mind
Be free from the black poison of suspect.

BEGGING EPISTLE TO THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

MY woful cry
To Sir Robert Pye;
And that he will venture
To send my debenture.
Tell him his Ben
Knew the time when
He loved the Muses:
Though now he refuses
To take apprehension
Of a year's pension,
And more is behind:

Put him in mind
Christmas is near,
And neither good cheer,
Mirth, fooling, or wit,
Nor any least fit,
Of gambol or sport
Will come at the Court;
If there be no money,
No plover or coney
Will come to the table,
Or wine to enable
The Muse or the Poet—
The Parish will know it.
Nor any quick warming pan help him to bed
If the chequer be empty, so will be his head.

STRAY THOUGHTS FROM JONSON.

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace.
The Silent Woman.

Preserving the sweetness of proportion and expressing itself beyond expression.—*The Masque of Hymen.*

In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.
Good Life, Long Life.

That for which all virtue now is sold
And almost every vice, almighty gold.
Epistle to Elizabeth.

Get money, still get money, boy
No matter by what means.
Every Man in his Humour.

Many might go to heaven with half the labour they go to hell, if they would venture their industry the right way.—*Prose Notes.*

Language most shows a man: speak that I may see thee: it springs out of the most retired and inmost parts of us.—*Ibid.*

Opinion is a light, vain, crude, and imperfect thing, settled in the imagination, but never arriving at the understanding, there to obtain the tincture of reason.—*Ibid.*

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT.

Born in Oxford in 1605. Made laureate in 1637. Died in 1668.

(Reigns of Charles I. and Charles II.)

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT, whom Southey called that eminently thoughtful poet, passed his life as laureate in the stirring and exciting days which preceded and followed the rebellion which deprived Charles I. of his throne and his life. But Austin and Ralph remark that though Davenant's life spanned the mighty chasm which separates the ancient from the modern of English history, his character, unlike that of his great contemporary Milton, took no form or colour from the solemn events passing around him. Davenant's intellectual work was, however, notable. He contributed to found a new literature. Calling to his aid the music of Italy and the scenery of France, he undertook, at the Restoration, to also restore the stage, and though he readily debased or refined his material in deference to the depraved taste of the age, he certainly deserves praise for what he accomplished.

Colley Cibber says that to Davenant the English stage "stands more deeply indebted than to any other individual, so far as zealous application deserves to be considered in promoting those rational pleasures that are fittest for the entertainment of a civilised people." And Cibber said this with all due deference to the inestimable services of Shakespeare and Jonson.

The father of Davenant was an Oxford innkeeper, his mother very beautiful. Rumour busied itself with uniting the name of this beautiful woman with that of Shakespeare, and Davenant himself often seemed to wish to attribute his own poetical and dramatic instincts to the fact that his father was other than the staid and sober innkeeper.

The boy was bright and lively, with a handsome face, and he did well at the Oxford grammar school, and matriculated at Lincoln College at sixteen. But he never was graduated: his tastes all seemed to point to a life far different from one spent in secluded college walls. He seemed cut out to be a courtier, and towards the court his aspirations early converged.

Therefore, he went to London, and winning there the favour



SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT.

of Lord Brooke he was admitted to the inner circle of society. In obedience to the prevailing taste of the age, Davenant perceived that if he were to become a writer, the best way to win distinction at court was to write plays. Many noblemen of high rank whom he flattered in his dedications responded by their unstinted patronage, and the numerous plays and masques which he brought out with great industry soon brought him fame and wealth. Best of all, he sought both the friendship and the advice of Ben Jonson, and, all things considered, it seemed natural that when that great dramatist died in 1637, the laurel which he had worn with so much honour should be given to his young associate. But Davenant did not win this distinction at once; for many months the office remained in abeyance, and when at last he received the appointment he had several formidable rivals. That he defeated them all does not necessarily prove that he was a better poet. The office which had been conferred upon Ben Jonson because he was the foremost man of letters of his time, ceased with Jonson to have this peculiar significance. With Davenant, who owed his appointment to the intercession of the queen, we see that the Laureateship was beginning to be more a mark of courtly favour than a reward for poetic merit. After Dryden's death the office became still more degraded.

Davenant not only served the crown by his services as laureate, but when the king's fortunes grew dark he stood firmly by his side, winning distinction at the seige of Gloucester (where he was knighted), and helping the queen by many friendly and delicate services.

Davenant's political as well as literary eminence invited many audacious satirical attacks. The lampoons which he inspired were oftentimes directed against his personal appearance. It is not known how it happened, but the face which in youth had been distinguished for its beauty, was marred in manhood by the loss of its principal feature. One of the most painful of the many insults he received on account of his disfigured nose was when, one day, he refused an unworthy woman charity. Instead of her curses he heard her beseeching Heaven to spare his eyesight. His attention being arrested thus, as he was passing on, he told her that his eyesight was very good. Her reply was that it pleased her much to hear this, as should it ever fail he would be in a sorry plight, as he would then have nothing upon which to rest his spectacles! Poor Davenant's portrait which has come down to us plainly shows this distressing disfigurement.

When the Parliament came into power Davenant fled to France, where he busied himself with his heroic poem, "Gondibert." Embarking after a time for the New World, his ship

was driven by a storm upon the English coast. The poet was made prisoner and taken to London. To the friendly intercession of Milton he probably owed his life, though the Tower held him captive for two years. "Gondibert," which he had thought was to be interrupted by "so great an experiment as dying," was here resumed, and the sad and lonely days in the Tower were cheered by this congenial work.

Released at length, he plunged with zest into his former theatrical life, but he was now the deposed laureate and had to work in secret. The Puritan reaction had closed the theatres, and the results of Davenant's efforts were very uncertain. But his aim was to revive the stage, and he worked on faithfully until the Restoration, and then he came boldly forth from his retirement. He opened a theatre for the production of his own plays, where he introduced many novelties in scenery, was the author of many innovations, such as women actors, musical accompaniments, etc., and thus the progress of the English drama owed much to this industrious worker.

Davenant was the first to begin that despicable remodelling of Shakespeare which Dryden, Tate, and others imitated; but they were all but catering to the depraved taste of the age, which could not appreciate the higher flights of genius. "The giant race before the flood" had long since departed, Shakespeare and Jonson were in their graves, the Elizabethan age was past and gone. Mere amusement was what was demanded of the poets if they were to win popular approval. The people wanted no great ennobling work of art, no moral strength and dignity on the stage.

At the Restoration the laurel had been again placed upon the brow of Davenant, and he wore it till his death in 1668. His last days were quiet and uneventful, much happier than those of Ben Jonson, and the end came in peace. His life had "exhibited a moving picture of genius in action and in contemplation. With all the infirmities of lively passions, he had all the redeeming virtues of magnanimity and generous affections," and at the last his friends laid him to rest in the sacred seclusion of the grand old Abbey.

Of Davenant's numerous plays it would be impossible to speak in detail. They are energetic and bold in construction, show novelty in imagery, and often originality in the analysis of character. They teem with philosophical reflections and condensed epigrams, and yet they lack passion and fire, and have not the exalted view of human nature and of the earnestness of human life which is shown in "Gondibert." Even with Davenant the stage began to take its downward course. And this, in spite of the great and undeniable services he rendered it. With all his talent, Davenant had not the moral force to

stem the tide of his age. He could not dictate to it like Jonson, nor was he unworldly enough, like Milton, to go serenely on, unmindful of its applause and its alluring rewards.

In the hands of dramatists like Wycherley, Etheredge, Congreve, and Davenant's successor in the Laureateship, Dryden, the English stage became a mere panderer to vice, well meriting the vigorous onslaughts of Jeremy Collier.

Milton said that he who aspires to write a heroic poem must make his own life heroic. Davenant himself said that he who writes a heroic poem gives a greater gift to posterity than to the present age. Poor Davenant hoped to win a place among the immortals by his "Gondibert," but, though many of its fine and sonorous phrases live in the language, the poem, as a whole, is seldom read. Yet the versatile genius of Davenant claims a far better fate for this poem than has been accorded it. Disraeli very justly calls attention to the new vein of invention in narrative poetry which Davenant opened in "Gondibert." "The poet styled it heroic, but we have since called it romantic." Scott, Byron, and Southey worked this same vein of invention, and discovered richer treasures than ever came within the ken of Davenant, and they had a depth of passion also unknown to him; but he was the pioneer, and should, for his originality, receive due praise. Davenant's work has neither the vitality nor the permanence of the best work of Jonson, and therefore it has not withstood the disintegrating power of time. But, as Disraeli says, one of the curiosities in the history of our poetry is this very poem, which is now nearly forgotten by the world: "The fortunes and the fate of this epic are as extraordinary as the poem itself. Davenant had viewed human life in all its shapes, and had himself taken them. A poet and a wit, the creator of the English stage, a soldier, an emigrant, a courtier, and a politician, and at all times a philosopher, he was, too, a state prisoner, awaiting death with his great poem in his hand."

SELECTIONS FROM DAVENANT.

TO THE QUEEN.

FAIR as unshaded light, or as the day
In its first birth, when all the year was May;
Sweet as the altar's smoke, or as the new
Unfolded bud, swell'd by the early dew;
Smooth as the face of waters first appear'd,
Ere tides began to strive or winds were heard;
Kind as the willing saints, or calmer far
Than in their sleeps forgiven hermits are.
You that are more than our discreeter fear
Dares praise, with such full art, what make you here?
Here, where the summer is so little seen,
That leaves, her cheapest wealth, scarce reach at green;
You came, as if the silver planet were
Misled awhile from her much-injured sphere;
And t' ease the travels of her beams to-night,
In this small lanthorn would contract her light.

SONG.

THE lark now leaves his watery nest,
And, climbing, shakes his dewy wings;
He takes this window for the east;
And to implore your light, he sings,
Awake, awake! the morn will never rise,
Till she can dress her beauty at your eyes.

The merchant bows unto the seaman's star,
The ploughman from the sun his season takes;
But still the lover wonders what they are,
Who look for day before his mistress wakes.
Awake, awake! break through your veils of lawn,
Then draw your curtains and begin the dawn.



"FOR PRAYER THE OCEAN IS."—*Page* 25.

PRAYER AND PRAISE.

For Prayer the ocean is, where diversely
Men steer their course, each to a different coast,
Where oft our interests so discordant be,
That half beg winds by which the rest are lost.

Praise is devotion fit for mighty minds,
The diff'ring World's agreeing sacrifice.

ON A SOLDIER GOING TO THE WARS.

Preserve thy sighs, unthrifty girl,
To purify the air;
Thy tears to thread instead of pearl,
On bracelets of thy hair.

The trumpet makes the echo hoarse,
And wakes the louder drum;
Expense of grief gains no remorse
When sorrow should be dumb.

For I must go where lazy Peace
Will hide her drowsy head;
And, for the sport of kings, increase
The number of the dead.

But first I'll chide thy cruel theft:
Can I in war delight,
Who, being of my heart bereft,
Can have no heart to fight?

Thou knows't the sacred laws of old
Ordained a thief should pay,
To quit him of his theft, sevenfold
What he had stol'n away.

Thy payment shall but double be,
O then with speed resign
My own seduced heart to me,
Accompany'd with thine.

WEEP NO MORE FOR WHAT IS PAST.

(*From "The Cruel Brothers."*)

WEEP no more for what is past,
For Time in motion makes such haste
He hath no leisure to descry
Those errors which he passeth by.
If we consider accident,
And how repugnant unto sense
It pays desert with bad event,
We shall disparage Providence.

CURSED JEALOUSY.

THIS cursed jealousy, what is't?
'Tis Love that has lost itself in a mist;
'Tis Love being frighted out of his wits;
'Tis Love that has a fever got;
Love that is violently hot,
But troubled with cold and trembling fits.
'Tis yet a more unnatural evil,
'Tis the god of Love, 'tis the god of Love,
Possessed with a devil.

ON THE CAPTIVITY OF THE COUNTESS OF ANGLESEY.

O WHITHER will you lead the fair
And spicy daughter of the morn?
Those manacles of her soft hair,
Princes, though free, would fain have worn.

What is her crime? what has she done?
Did she, by breaking beauty, stay,
Or from his course mislead the sun,
So robbed your harvest of a day?

Or did her voice, divinely clear,
Since lately in your forest bred,
Make all the trees dance after her,
And so your woods disforested?

BALLAD.

(*From "The Rivals."*)

My lodging is on the cold ground,
And very hard is my fare;
But that which troubles me most is
The unkindness of my dear;
Yet still I cry, O turn, love,
And I prithee, love, turn to me,
For thou art the man that I long for,
And, alack! what remedy!

I'll crown thee with a garland of straw then,
And I'll marry thee with a rush ring;
My frozen hopes shall thaw then,
And merrily we will sing.
O turn to me, my dear love,
And I prithee, love, turn to me,
For thou art the man who alone can'st
Procure my liberty.

But if thou wilt harden thy heart still,
And be deaf to my pitiful moan,
Then I must endure the smart still,
And lie in my straw all alone.
Yet still I cry, O turn love,
And I prithee, love, turn to me,
For thou art the man that alone art
The cause of my misery.

PLATONIC LOVERS.

How sad and dismal sound the farewells which
Poor lovers take, whom destiny disjoins,
Although they know their absence will be short;
And when they meet again how musical
And sweet are all the mutual joys they breathe!
Like birds, who when they see the weary sun
Forsake the world, they lay their little heads
Beneath their wings, to ease that weight which his
Departure adds unto their grief.
'Tis true, my love: But when they see that bright
Perpetual traveller return, they warm
And air their feathers at his beams, and sing
Until their gratitude hath made them hoarse.

STRAY SELECTIONS FROM DAVENANT.

Care visits cities, but she dwells in thrones.

Rich are the diligent, who can command
Time, nature's stock, and could his hour-glass fall,
Would, as for seed of stars, stoop for the sand,
And by incessant labour gather all.

The laws, men from themselves, and not from power, secure.

A library : a monument of vanished minds.

Truth's a discovery of travelling minds.

Honour's the moral conscience of the great.

They grow so certain as to need no hope.

The pious man served Heaven with praise, the world with prayer.

All that God did e'er invent, or breath inspired,
Or flying fingers touched into a voice are here.

A library :
Where they thought they saw
The assembled souls of all that men held wise.

This Florentine 's a very saint, so meek
And full of courtesy, that he would lend
The devil his cloak, and stand i' th' rain himself.

Since Knowledge is but Sorrow's spy
It is not safe to know.

—*Gondibert.*

CONSCIENCE.

FOR though the judge, Conscience makes no show,
But silently to her dark session comes,
Not as red law does to arraignment go,
Or war to execution, with loud drums.

Though she on hills sets not her gibbets high,
Where frightful Law sets hers ; nor bloody seems,
Like war in colours spread, yet secretly
She does her work, and many men condemns ;

Chokes in the seed what Law, till ripe, ne'er sees;
What Law would punish, Conscience can prevent;
And so the world from many mischiefs frees;
Known by her cures, as Law by punishment.

CHARACTER AND LOVE OF BIRTHA.

(Extracts from "Gondibert.")

To Astragon, Heaven for succession gave
One only pledge, and Birtha was her name;
Whose mother slept, where flowers grew on her grave,
And she succeeded her in face and name.

. . . . .

She never had in busy cities been,
Ne'er warm'd with hopes, nor e'er allay'd with fears;
Not seeing punishment, could guess no sin;
And sin not seeing, ne'er had use of tears.

But here her father's precepts gave her skill,
Which with incessant business fill'd the hours;
In Spring, she gathered blossoms for the still;
In Autumn, berries; and in Summer, flowers.

. . . . . .

Whilst her great mistress, Nature, thus she tends,
The busy household waits no less on her:
By secret law, each to her beauty bends;
Though all her lowly mind to that prefer.

The just historians Birtha thus express,
And tell how, by her sire's example taught,
She served the wounded duke in life's distress,
And his fled spirits back by cordials brought;

Black melancholy mists, that fed despair,
Through wounds' long rage, with sprinkled vervain clear'd;
Strew'd leaves of willow to refresh the air,
And with rich fumes his sullen senses cheer'd.

He that had served great Love with reverend heart,
In these old wounds worse wounds from him endures:
For Love makes Birtha shift with Death his dart,
And she kills faster than her father cures.

Her heedless innocence as little knew
The wounds she gave, as those from Love she took;
And Love lifts high each secret shaft he drew;
Which at their stars he first in triumph shook.

. . . . . .

Love he had lik'd but never lodg'd before;
But finds him now a bold unquiet guest;
Who climbs to windows when we shut the door;
And, enter'd, never lets the master rest.

. . . . . .

Soon her opinion of his hurtless heart
Affection turns to faith; and then love's fire
To heaven, though bashfully, she does impart;
And to her mother in the heavenly choir.

If I do love (said she), that love, O Heaven!
Your own disciple, Nature, bred in me;
Why should I hide the passion you have given,
Or blush to show effects which you decree?

. . . . . .

This said, her soul into her breast retires;
With Love's vain diligence of heart she dreams
Herself into possession of desires,
And trusts unanchor'd Hope in fleeting streams:

. . . . . .

She thinks of Eden-life; and no rough wind
In their pacific sea shall wrinkles make;
That still her lowliness shall keep him kind,
Her cares keep him asleep, her voice awake.

She thinks if ever anger in him sway
(The youthful warrior's most excused disease),
Such chance her tears shall calm, as showers allay
The accidental rage of winds and seas.

Thus to herself in day-dreams Birtha talks:
The duke (whose wounds of war are healthful grown)
To cure Love's wounds, seeks Birtha where she walks:
Whose wandering soul seeks him to cure her own.



JOHN DRYDEN.

JOHN DRYDEN.

Born in Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire, in 1631. Made laureate in 1670, two years after the death of Davenant. Deposed at the Revolution. Died in 1700.

(Reigns of Charles II. and James II.)

"POETRY, to be just to itself, ought always to precede and be the herald of improvement," wrote Longfellow years ago in the pages of the *North American Review*. How little Dryden's work was the herald of improvement every earnest student of literature feels keenly. All his influence seemed to hasten the downward course of poetry in England. Dryden was neither true to himself nor to his genius. His splendid endowments fitted him to be a dictator to mankind, and he was himself governed by the worst tendencies of his age. A superb reasoner; a critic of learning and ability, possessing powers of satire which have never been surpassed; master of a prose style which was sinewy, flexible, and eloquent, and of a poetical versification remarkable for its clearness, its grace, its command of variations in metre—yet to Dryden there was not

> "That sublimer inspiration given
> That glows in Shakespeare's or in Milton's page—
> The pomp and prodigality of Heaven."

The record of Dryden's life proves that it was clearly his own choice that he missed the highest. The poetical achievement and moral dignity of his great contemporary, Milton, show that a man may, if he choose, emancipate himself from the influences of his age, and stem the tide of its evil. But in Dryden, from first to last, we see a lack of earnestness, of honesty of purpose, of "belief in and devotion to something nobler and more abiding than the present moment and its petulant need."

Without such devotion a man's work cannot be called truly great. And yet, with all Dryden's fatal defects of soul, his intellectual services cannot be ignored:—he has been justly called both the glory and the shame of our literature.

Dryden's grandfather was a baronet; his father a younger son of an ancient and honourable family, whose traditions were all Puritan. Little is known of his childhood, except that he was sturdy and precocious. Sent to Westminster school, he

often felt the "classic rod" of Dr. Busby, but the boy's temperament was such that neither punishments nor abuse had much power to affect his serene self-confidence. He was very susceptible to praise, and in this we see the root of his subsequent literary methods.

Dryden did not win many honours at Cambridge, whither he went at the age of nineteen, but he took his degree; and then, as his income was very small, he went to live in London as secretary to a kinsman. Here his career began. All his interests were with the Puritan party, and on the death of Cromwell he wrote an elegy strong in praise of republicanism. But Dryden was bent on personal advancement, and for the true welfare of England he had little regard; at heart he was a time-server and a political and religious turncoat. At the Restoration his hopes from the Puritan party were frustrated, and among the flatterers who sang the glories of the old order of things, he stood pre-eminent. In "Astrea Redux," and other poems about Charles II., Dryden's tributes to the king's virtues and god-like qualities might almost rank as satire, if that were possible.

In the beginning of Dryden's career he married a woman of rank and beauty, but little happiness came to him. Lady Elizabeth Howard was quick-tempered, and he was not domestic in his tastes, and much friction was, therefore, the inevitable result. A man who, to his wife's wish that she were a book that she might have more of his company, could reply: "Be an almanac then, my dear, that I may change you once a year," could not be called a model husband.

Attracted to the stage in the same way as Davenant had been, Dryden brought out his first play in 1662, but it fell flat. Successful with his third, and wishing to win the favour of a king who advocated the use of rhyme, Dryden soon began those rhyming dramas which have been so justly condemned. Pepys, though he censured the rhyme as breaking the sense, said that he and his wife returned home after the performance of one of these plays before the king, mightily contented.

Dryden's plays were artificial; showed no insight into character; no pathos or tenderness, and, worst of all, they were disfigured by those obscenities which make them utterly unfit to be read. Pepys pronounced many of them "very smutty."

During the year of the fire and the plague, when the theatres were closed, Dryden wrote that work which has won him distinction as a critic, "The Essay of Dramatic Poesy." In this he defended the use of rhyme, but profiting by the parodies of the Duke of Buckingham, Dryden soon changed his opinion of rhyme, and we find that whenever he employed blank verse he gained in both depth and range.

Dryden's "Essay on the Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy," in which he paid tributes to the Shakespearean drama, show him with all his ethical limitations to have possessed an intellectual breadth and accessibility to ideas very essential in a critic. In these essays, and his numerous dedications and prefaces, we see Dryden's decided power as a writer of prose.

In 1670, two years after the death of Davenant, Dryden was made laureate. The appointment of Historiographer added another hundred pounds to his income. But the court favour, which had first been obtained by being false to hereditary traditions, could only be kept by obedience to the same methods. When James II. came to the throne, Dryden, probably to please him, became a Roman Catholic. But the poet who with such eloquence had upheld the Church of England in "Religio Laici," and the Church of Rome in "The Hind and Panther," could not, with any dignity, recant in the short space of three years and swear allegiance to the Protestant William. Therefore, at the Revolution, which deprived James of his crown, poor Dryden was left out in the cold. The people had little patience with the Romanist laureate. Lord Dorset, the Lord Chancellor, was compelled to yield to the popular voice, and Dryden was deposed.

In 1678 a change in Dryden's literary methods manifested itself, which resulted in works of greater scope and individuality. After this we have his great satires, his best plays, his odes, and his translations and Fables. It would be impossible to speak of these in detail. In the splendid satire "Absalom and Achitophel" Dryden first showed the hand of the master. He has immortalised his literary rivals as well as political foes. In "MacFlecknoe" Dryden's satire became still more caustic and pointed, but many of his hits degenerate into caricature, and prove that satire is one of the falsest of guides. From Shadwell himself Dryden might have learned a lesson of steadfastness and political constancy which would have done him good. It must have been hard for Dryden to have had the Laureateship taken from him and given to the very man whom he had treated so unjustly.

Dryden lived eleven years after the loss of the laurel, and some of his best work was done under the pressure of poverty, notably that magnificent "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," called also "Alexander's Feast," which was the finest burst of his lyrical genius. Dryden laboured hard at his translations and Fables, and his rewards were fame and money, but even during the last of his life we find his poetry, with all its intellectual subtlety, its felicity of style, its charm and its power, disfigured by that disregard of moral purity and dignity which was a feature of the poet's own character and of the age in which he lived.

When Jeremy Collier attacked the stage, of course his vigorous criticism touched the literary lion of the day whose influence was so widespread and powerful. Dryden felt the criticism to be just, and with singular openness of mind confessed so publicly.

Two years after the publication of Collier's great work, Dryden died of an inflammation of the foot, and was buried with great pomp in the grand old Abbey. It is almost certain that, had he lived, we should have had poetry from his hand purer and greater than any which he had written before.

William Whitehead, one of the laureates of the latter end of the eighteenth century, thus feelingly painted the situation of Dryden in his last days:

> "The hapless Dryden of a shameless age!
> Ill-fated bard! where'er thy name appears
> The weeping verse a sad momento bears;
> Ah! what availed the enormous blaze between
> Thy dawn of glory and thy closing scene?"

Leslie Stephen but recently wrote of Dryden: "He is a master within his own sphere of thought. But there is something depressing about his atmosphere. . . He ought to be on our shelves, but he will rarely be found in our hearts."

SELECTIONS FROM DRYDEN.

SONG FOR SAINT CECILIA'S DAY, 1687.

FROM Harmony, from heavenly Harmony
This universal frame began:
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high
Arise, ye more than dead!
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

The trumpet's loud clangour
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms,
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hapless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion
For the fair disdainful dame.

But oh! what act can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees uprooted left their place
Sequacious of the lyre:
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder highe..
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd—
Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above:
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST: OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC, AN ODE IN HONOUR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY, NOVEMBER, 1697.

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne:
His valiant peers were placed around;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound:



'THE TREMBLING NOTES ASCEND THE SKY."
—*Page* 37.

(So should desert in arms be crowned).
The lovely Thais, by his side,
Sate, like a blooming eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

Timotheus plac'd on high,
Amid the tuneful choir,
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above
(Such is the power of mighty love).
A dragon's fiery form bely'd the god;
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
When he to fair Olympia press'd;
And while he sought her snowy breast;
Then round her slender waist he curl'd,
And stamp'd an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
A present deity, they shout around:
A present deity the vaulted roofs rebound:
With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus, then, the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus, ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;
Flush'd with a purple grace,
He shows his honest face:
Now give the hautboys breath. He comes, he comes!
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain.
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Sooth'd with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And twice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise;
His gleaming cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And, while he heaven and earth defy'd,
Chang'd his hand and check'd his pride.
He chose a mournful muse
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius great and good.
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood;
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And now and then a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see
That love was in the next degree:
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honour but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying:
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying!
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee.
The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gaz'd on the fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

Now, strike the golden lyre again;
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has rais'd up his head:
As awak'd from the dead;
And, amazed, he stares around.
Revenge, revenge! Timotheus cries;
See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair!
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts that in battle were slain,
And unbury'd remain
Inglorious on the plain,
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.
The princes applaud with a furious joy:
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,
While organs yet were mute;
Timotheus, to his breathing flute,
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He rais'd a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down.

SELECTION FROM ELEONORA.

No single virtue we could most commend,
Whether the wife, the mother, or the friend;
For she was all, in that supreme degree,
What as no one prevailed, so all was she.
The several parts lay hidden in the piece;
The occasion but exerted that or this,
A wife as tender, and as true withal,
As the first woman was before her fall:
Made for the man, of whom she was a part:
Made to attract his eyes, and keep his heart.
A second Eve, but by no crime accursed;
As beauteous, not as brittle as the first.
Had she been first, still Paradise had been,
And death had found no entrance by her sin.

. . . . . .

Yet unemployed no minute slipped away;
Moments were precious in so short a stay.
The haste of Heaven to have her was so great
That some were single acts, though each complete;
But every act stood ready to repeat.
Her fellow-saints with busy care will look
For her blest name in fate's eternal book;
And, pleased to be outdone, with joy will see
Numberless virtues, endless charity:
But more will wonder at so short an age,
To find a blank beyond the thirtieth page:
And with a pious fear begin to doubt
The piece imperfect, and the rest torn out.
But 'twas her Saviour's time; and could there be
A copy near the original, 'twas she.
As precious gums are not for lasting fire,
They but perfume the temple and expire;
So was she soon exhaled, and vanished hence,
A short sweet odour of a vast expense.
She vanished, we can scarcely say she died;
For but a now did heaven and earth divide:
She passed serenely with a single breath;
This moment perfect health, the next was death:
One sigh did her eternal bliss assure;
So little penance needs, where souls are almost pure.
As gentle dreams our waking thoughts pursue;
Or, one dream passed, we slide into a new;
So close they follow, such wild order keep,
We think ourselves awake, and are asleep:

So softly death succeeded life in her:
She did but dream of heaven, and she was there.
No pains she suffered, nor expired with noise;
Her soul was whispered out with God's still voice;
As an old friend is beckoned to a feast,
And treated like a long familiar guest.
He took her as he found, but found her so,
As one in hourly readiness to go:
E'en on that day in all her trim prepar'd,
As early notice she from heaven had heard,
And some descending courier from above
Had given her timely warning to remove:
Or counselled her to dress the nuptial room,
For on that night the bridegroom was to come.
He kept his hour, and found her where she lay
Clothed all in white, the livery of the day.

This paraphrase of the Latin hymn popularly attributed to Charlemagne was first printed in Tonson's folio edition of Dryden's Poems, 1701.

CREATOR SPIRIT, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come, visit every pious mind;
Come, pour thy joys on human kind;
From sin and sorrows set us free,
And make thy temples worthy thee.
Oh, source of uncreated light,
The Father's promised Paraclete!
Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire,
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;
Come, and thy sacred unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing.
Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
Rich in thy sevenfold energy!
Thou strength of his Almighty hand,
Whose power does heaven and earth command.
Proceeding Spirit, our defence,
Who dost the gift of tongues dispense,
And crown'st thy gift with eloquence,
Refine and purge our earthly parts;
But, oh, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice control,
Submit the senses to the soul;

And when rebellious they are grown,
Then lay thy hand, and hold them down.
Chase from our minds the infernal foe,
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;
And lest our feet should step astray,
Protect and guide us in the way.
Make us eternal truths receive,
And practise all that we believe:
Give us thyself, that we may see
The Father and the Son by thee.
Immortal honour, endless fame,
Attend the Almighty Father's name:
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost man's redemption died:
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to thee!

SELECTION.

ALAS! what stay is there in human state,
Or who can shun inevitable fate?

The doom was written, the decree was past,
Ere the foundations of the world were cast.

LIMIT OF FATE.

ON what strange grounds we build our hopes and fears!
Man's life is all a mist, and in the dark our fortunes meet us.
If fate be not, then what can we foresee?
And how can we avoid it if it be?
If by free will in our own paths we move,
How are we bounded by decrees above?
Whether we drive, or whether we are driven,
If ill, 'tis ours; if good, the act of Heaven.

THE OLD AGE OF THE TEMPERATE.

SOME few, by Temperance taught, approaching slow,
To distant fate by easy journeys go:
Gently they lay them down, as ev'ning sheep,
On their own woolly fleeces softly sleep.



"THE FAIR, BUT SHORT LIVED LILY."
—*Page* 43.

So noiseless would I live, such death to find;
Like timely fruit, not shaken by the wind:
But ripely dropping from the sapless bough,
And, dying, nothing to myself would owe.
Thus daily changing, with a duller taste
Of lessening joys, I by degrees would waste:
Still quitting ground by unperceiv'd decay;
And steal myself from Life, and fade away.

HUMAN LIFE.

(*From "Aurengzebe."*)

WHEN I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit:
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay:
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies worse; and while it says we shall be blest
With some new joys cuts off what we possessed.
Strange cozenage! None would live past years again;
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.

THE INFANT.

(*From "Lucretius."*)

THUS like a sailor by the tempest hurled
Ashore, the Babe is shipwrecked on the World;
Naked he lies and ready to expire,
Helpless of all that human wants require:
Exposed upon inhospitable Earth,
From the first moment of his hapless birth.

BEAUTY AND YOUTH.

BEAUTY and youth are frail: their charms will soon
decay,
Their lustre fades as rolling years increase,
And Age still triumphs o'er the ruined face.
This truth, the fair but short-lived lily shows,
And prickles, that survive the faded rose.

Learn, lovely Boy: be with instruction wise;
Beauty and youth misspent are past advice:
Then cultivate the mind with wit and fame:
Those lasting charms survive the fun'ral flame.

SELECTION.

And could we choose the time and choose aright,
'Tis best to die our honour at the height.
When we have done our ancestors no shame,
But served our friends, and well secured our fame.
Then should we wish our happy life to close,
And leave no more for fortune to dispose,
So should we make our death a glad relief
From future shame, from sickness, and from grief,
Enjoying while we live the present hour,
And dying in our excellence and flower.

REASON AND RELIGION.

(*From "Religio Laici."*)

Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars,
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is Reason to the soul; and as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,—
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.

A SIMILE.

Till, like a clock worn out with beating time,
The weary wheels of life at last stood still.

MEN.

(*From "All for Love."*)

MEN are but children of a larger growth;
Our appetites as apt to change as theirs,
And full as craving too, and full as vain;
And yet the soul shut up in her dark room,
Viewing so clear abroad, at home sees nothing;
But like a mole in earth, busy and blind,
Works all her folly up, and casts it outward
To the world's view.

THE UNITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

(*From "The Hind and the Panther."*)

ONE in herself, not rent by schism or sound,
Entire, one solid shining diamond,
Not sparkles shattered into sects like you:
One is the Church, and must be to be true,
One central principle of unity;
As undivided, so from errors free;
As one in faith, so one in sanctity.
Thus she, and none but she, the insulting rage
Of heretics opposed from age to age;
Still, when the giant-brood invades her throne,
She stoops from heaven and meets them half way down,
And with paternal thunder vindicates her crown.
But like Egyptian sorcerers you stand,
And vainly lift aloft your magic wand
To sweep away the swarms of vermin from the land.
You could like them, with like infernal force,
Produce the plague, but not arrest the course.
But when the boils and blotches with disgrace
And public scandal sat upon the face,
Themselves attacked, the magi strove no more,
They saw God's finger, and their fate deplore;
Themselves they could not cure of the dishonest sore.
Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread,
Like the fair ocean from her mother-bed;
From east to west triumphantly she rides,
All shores are watered by her wealthy tides.
The Gospel-sound, diffused from pole to pole,
Where winds can carry and where waves can roll,
The self-same doctrine of the sacred page
Conveyed to every clime, in every age.

FROM RIVAL LADIES.

My soul lies hid in shades of grief,
Whence, like the bird of night, with half-shut eyes
She peeps, and sickens at the sight of day.

AH, HOW SWEET!

Ah, how sweet it is to love!
  Ah, how gay is young desire!
And what pleasing pains we prove
  When we first approach love's fire!
Pains of love are sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are.

Sighs which are from lovers blown
  Do but gently heave the heart:
E'en the tears they shed alone
  Cure, like trickling balm, their smart.
Lovers, when they lose their breath,
Bleed away in easy death.

Love and time with reverence use,
  Treat them like a parting friend;
Nor the golden gifts refuse
  Which in youth sincere they send;
For each year their price is more,
And they less simple than before.

Love, like spring-tides full and high,
  Swells in every youthful vein;
But each tide does less supply,
  Till they quite shrink in again.
If a flow in age appear,
'Tis but rain, and runs not clear.

UNDER MR. MILTON'S PICTURE, BEFORE HIS PARADISE LOST.

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first, in loftiness of thought surpass'd;
The next, in majesty; in both the last.
The force of Nature could no further go;
To make a third, she join'd the former two.

SONG.

AH, fading joy! how quickly art thou past!
Yet we thy ruin haste.
As if the cares of human life were few,
We seek out new:
And follow fate which would too fast pursue.

See how on every bough the birds express
In their sweet notes their happiness.
They all enjoy and nothing spare,
But on their mother nature lay their care:
Why, then, should man, the lord of all below,
Such troubles choose to know
As none of all his subjects undergo?

Hark, hark! the waters fall, fall, fall;
And with a murmuring sound
Dash, dash upon the ground,
To gentle slumbers call.

TRADITION.

(*From "Religio Laici."*)

MUST all tradition then be set aside?
This to affirm, were ignorance or pride,
Are there not many points; some needful sure
To saving faith, that Scripture leaves obscure,
Which every sect will wrest a several way?
For what one sect interprets, all sects may.

SELECTIONS FROM ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honour blessed,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won,
To that unfeathered two-legg'd thing, a son;
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try;
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate;
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state.

Heaven has to all allotted, soon or late,
Some lucky revolution of their fate:
Whose motions, if we watch and guide with skill
(For human good depends on human will),
Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,
And from the first impression takes the bent:
But, if unseized, she glides away like wind,
And leaves repenting folly far behind.

Whate'er he did was done with so much ease;
In him alone was natural to please.

A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er informed the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleased with the danger when the waves went high,
He sought the storms.

Heaven had wanted one immortal song.

Wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,
And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land.

A successive title, long and dark,
Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah's ark.

Who think too little and who talk too much.

His tribe were God Almighty's gentlemen.

Whose weighty sense
Flows in fit words, and heavenly eloquence,

Beware the fury of a patient man.

To show his judgment in extremes
So over violent or over civil,
That every man with him was god or devil.

Dashed through thick and thin,
Through sense and nonsense, never out nor in.

SHADWELL.

(*From "Mac Flecknoe"*—1682.)

ALL human things are subject to decay,
And, when Fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was called to empire and had governed long,
In prose and verse was owned without dispute
Through all the realms of nonsense absolute.
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase,
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the state;
And pondering which of all his sons was fit
To reign and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried, "Tis resolved, for nature pleads that he
Should only rule who most resembles me.
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years;
Shadwell alone of all my sons is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through and make a lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems designed for thoughtless majesty.
Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology.
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way,
And coarsely clad in Norwich drugget came
To teach the nations in thy greater name."

STRAY LINES FROM DRYDEN.

For truth has such a face and such a mien,
As to be loved needs only to be seen.
—*Hind and Panther.*

Thus all below is strength and all above is grace.
—*Epistle to Congreve.*

Better to hunt in fields for health unbought,
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.
The wise for cure on exercise depend;
God never made his work for man to mend.
—*Epistle to John Dryden.*

Wit will shine
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.
—*To the Memory of Mr. Oldham.*

Defend against your judgment your departed friend.
—*Epistle to Congreve.*

As sure as a gun.
—*The Spanish Friar.*

Bless the hand that gave the blow.
—*The Spanish Friar.*

Second thoughts, they say, are best.
—*The Spanish Friar.*

I have a soul, that like an ample shield
Can take in all.
—*Don Sebastian.*

O gracious God! how far have we
Profaned thy heavenly gift of poesy!
—*Elegy on Mrs. Killigrew.*

For art may err, but Nature cannot miss.
—*The Cock and the Fox.*

The sweet civilities of life.
—*Cymon and Iphigenia.*

Happy who in his verse can steer, gently steer
From grave to light, from pleasant to severe.
—*The Art of Poetry.*

Happy the man and happy he alone,
He who can call to-day his own;
He, who, secure within can say
To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day.
—*Imitations of Horace.*

He's a sure card.
—*The Spanish Friar.*

Not Heaven itself upon the past has power;
But what has been, has been.
—*Imitations of Horace.*

Virtue though in rags will keep me warm.
—*Imitations of Horace.*

Errors like straws upon the surface flow,
He who would search for pearls must dive below.
—*All for Love.*

Your ignorance is the mother of your devotion to me.
—*The Maiden Queen.*

But Shakespeare's magic could not copied be;
Within that circle none durst walk but he.
—*Prologue to The Tempest.*

Forgiveness to the injured does belong;
But they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong.
—*Conquest of Granada.*

All delays are dangerous in war.
—*Tyrannic Love.*

Whatever is, is in its causes just.
—*Œdipus.*

THOMAS SHADWELL.

Born at Lanton Hall, Norfolk, in 1640. Made laureate in 1689, after the Revolution. Died in 1692.

(Reign of William III.)

WHEN Southey said that of all his predecessors Nahum Tate would rank the lowest of the laureates if he had not succeeded Shadwell, he was scarcely just; though as a poet Shadwell does not take high rank. He was a true son of his age, and he belonged to the artificial school that prevailed. That school, as we have seen, dealt only with the surfaces of things, ignored the depths of life, the mysteries of human existence, and had little appreciation of the sublime loveliness of the outward world; and when it did seek to describe or interpret that beauty in nature, it did so "under the guidance of sentiments put on for the most part like a stage dress, and in language which seemed not to belong to the world which we know."

As a writer of plays which mirrored the fashions and ideas of his time Shadwell did good work. But Shadwell had not that perseverance in detail which attains perfection. His plays, with all their unmistakable cleverness, are not symmetrical. He began well, but much of his work was either left unfinished, or finished so hastily that it is far from artistic. Wycherley used to say of him that "he knew how to start a fool very well, but that he was never able to run him down." And Rochester alluded to the same defect in the lines:

> "Of all our modern wits none seems to me
> Once to have touched upon true comedy,
> But hasty Shadwell and slow Wycherley.
> Shadwell's unfinished works do yet impart
> Great proofs of nature's force, though none of art;
> With just, bold strokes he dashes here and there
> Showing great mastery."

It is one proof of a man's power if his peculiarites of style, or his methods of delineating character or social conditions, are imitated by his successors. One of Scott's novels is obviously modelled upon Shadwell's "Squire of Alsatia," and Scott never hesitated to express his admiration of Shadwell's talents. It is a significant fact that Macaulay in "seeking illustrations of the times and occurrences of which he writes, cites Shadwell five



THOMAS SHADWELL.

times where he mentions contemporary dramatists but once." In the nineteenth chapter of his history he quotes a whole scene from Shadwell's "Stockjobbers."

Otway was warm in his praise of Shadwell; and Langbaine said: "I own I like his comedies better than Mr. Dryden's, as having more variety of characters, and those drawn from the life." The truthfulness of Shadwell's comedies show but too well the state of society of the time.

There had been a great change since the era of rare Ben Jonson. The delicate airy Masques which were so well fitted to reveal his lyrical genius had now ceased to be the favourite diversion. Instead of truth to nature, vivid portraiture of character, and analysis of motives, the corrupt court of Charles and James craved amusement, and that of the most dissolute kind. Dryden, who had been so willing to pander to the vices of the court, despised and underrated Shadwell, and as far as morality is concerned, Shadwell's plays are no better than Dryden's. He preserved the old coarse traditions of the Restoration. His comedies are disfigured by that grossness, that rank impurity, which makes them now unfit to be read. Yet the originality and humour, the brilliancy and sparkle, of these plays made him one of the most popular writers of the age; and he showed far more insight and real power than Dryden. The "Lancashire Witches and Teague O'Divelly" held the stage many years after Shadwell had bidden life a last farewell, and this after the taste of the people had changed and become purer and more healthful. This was doubtless owing to the fine flashes of humour in the play, for it contains one of the earliest specimens of the "stage Irishman" who is always so irresistibly attractive. In delineating the vices and follies so fashionable, Shadwell showed both skill and wit, but many times he condescended to coarse caricature. His aim was not, like Jonson, to reform and change. He was the observer and the painter, never the reformer or the preacher. From an unknown hand came the Epilogue to Shadwell's "Volunteers"—perhaps he wrote it himself, who knows?

> "Shadwell, the great support o' the comic stage,
> Born to expose the follies of the age.
> To whip prevailing vices and unite
> Mirth with instruction, profit with delight."

But his popularity was owing to his skill in delighting, never instructing his audience.

Shadwell always had an ardent admiration for Ben Jonson, and called him the greatest dramatist of the world. Many of his own plays were modelled upon Jonson's original method of bringing into prominence certain "humours" or personal eccen-

tricities. It is obvious that the personification of single propensities does not result in the creation of real men and women, but abstract beings, who have little in common with the great mass of humanity. Then, though Shadwell was a quick observer, he did not see far beneath the surfaces of human life. He neither knew how to develop character nor depict its more subtle differences. This lack of intellectual depth affected his estimate of Shakespeare. In 1678 he "improved" "Timon of Athens," saying, "Shakespeare never made more masterly strokes than in this, yet I can truly say I have made it into a play." This attempt of Shadwell's was, in Southey's opinion, temerity which should have caused his bust in Westminster Abbey to have been cast either in lead or in brass, or an emblematic amalgama of the two metals.

As a laureate Shadwell's poetical efforts showed little originality or power. It was he who first inaugurated the Annual Birthday Odes. Each laureate who came after continued to furnish a poem on the occasion of every royal birthday, or important anniversary, or court festival—his "quit rent ode, his peppercorn of praise," as Cowper termed it,—until Southey himself wisely abolished the custom. When Southey was offered the laurel he expressed the wish that the appointment might be placed on a footing which would exact from the holder nothing like a schoolboy's task, but leave him at liberty to write when and how he pleased, and thus render the office as honourable as it was originally intended to be.

Shadwell's odes to William were poor enough. Had they been better it is doubtful if William would have known it.

Shadwell's life was uneventful. Born in 1640 at Lanton Hall in Norfolk, his childhood was a happy one. He was of good family, but his father's fortune had been greatly reduced by the civil war, and "Tom" was educated for the bar. After a course of study at Cambridge and the Inner Temple, he went for a tour on the Continent, but his travels but increased an unrest and dislike of steady application to study which had been evident from the first. He returned to London to write verses and design plays rather than attend to his profession. The attractions of the theatre proved too alluring for his pleasure-loving temperament, so he soon gave up law entirely, frequented the taverns and coffee houses, and lived a life of alternate dissipation and earnest devotion to literary pursuits. The result of that devotion was seen in the production of a comedy every year after he had once won fame by his "Sullen Lovers." He married an actress whose knowledge of the stage and its requirements was of great help to him in his work. The marriage was a happy one, and to the generosity of his son, Sir John Shadwell, we owe the monument in Westminster Abbey.

Shadwell's private life was unfortunately not free from the vices so common to his age; but politically he was honourable, steadfast, and sincere. Always a "true blue Protestant," no hopes of court preferment ever had the slightest power to tempt him to change his faith. He was also a true friend and an open-hearted enemy. He never struck an opponent in the back, but faced him in fair fight. He and Dryden had once been friendly enough for Dryden to write one of Shadwell's prologues, but Dryden's religious apostasy excited Shadwell's ire, and he attacked Dryden in some satirical verses which were never forgiven. Poor Shadwell paid dearly for his rashness. The injustice of "Mac Flecknoe" has been a serious detriment to Shadwell's fame. Dryden's satire hurt him in the same way as Pope's "Dunciad" hurt Cibber. Dryden and Pope were so much greater than either Shadwell or Cibber that it is not surprising that the world all these years has drawn its impression from the two great satires rather than from an independent study of the lives or works of Shadwell and Cibber. Shadwell felt in a measure compensated by the gift of the laurel, though he was too magnanimous to ever taunt Dryden with his misfortunes. He was laureate only four short years, and he died eight years before his great enemy. The end was due to an overdose of opium—sad termination to a dramatic career of unusual brilliancy and influence. Shadwell's funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Brady, chaplain to the king. Old Chelsea Church was thronged by a sympathetic audience, and many tears were shed for the man whose life had not all been spent in selfish pleasure, but had diffused itself in many kindly acts. The sermon dwelt on Shadwell's political integrity, and then Dr. Brady said: "His natural and acquired abilities made him very amiable to all who conversed with him, a very few being equal in the becoming qualities which adorn and set off a complete gentleman; his very enemies, if he has now any left, will give him this character, at least, if they knew him as thoroughly as I did." Panegyrics of this kind are not always to be trusted; but we can feel sure; that in spite of Shadwell's faults as a man and his limitations as a poet, he in no way resembled the portrait of him which has come down to us in the immortal verse of Dryden.

SELECTIONS FROM SHADWELL.

ODE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE KING'S BIRTH.

WELCOME, thrice welcome, this auspicious morn
On which the great Nassau was born,
Sprung from a mighty race which was designed
For the deliv'rers of mankind.
Illustrious heroes, whose prevailing fates
Raised the distressed to high and mighty states;
And did by that possess more true renown,
Than their Adolphus gained by the Imperial crown.

They cooled the rage, humbled the pride of Spain.
But since the insolence of France no less,
Had brought the States into distress,
But that a precious scion did remain
From that great root, which did the shock sustain,
And made them high and mighty once again.
This prince for us was born to make us free
From the most abject slavery.
Thou hast restored our laws their force again;
We still shall conquer on the land by thee;
By thee shall conquer on the main.

But thee a Fate much more sublime attends,
Europe for freedom on thy sword depends;
And thy victorious arms shall tumble down
The savage monster from the Gallick throne;
To this important day we all shall owe,
Oh glorious birth, from which such blest effects shall flow.
(*General chorus of voices and instruments.*)

On this glad day let every voice
And instrument proclaim our joys,
And let all Europe join in the triumphant noise,
Io Triumphe let us sing,
Io Triumphe let us sing,
And let the sound through all the spacious welkin ring.

Thus the prophetic muses say,
And all thy wise and good will pray,
That they long, long, may celebrate this day.
  Soon haughty France shall bow, and coz'ning Rome,
  And Britain mistress of the world become;
And from thy wise, thy God-like sway,
Kings learn to reign, and subjects to obey.

SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY.

O SACRED harmony, prepare our lays,
While, on Cecilia's day, we sing your praise,
From earth to heaven our warbling voices raise!

Join all ye glorious instruments around,
The yielding air with your vibrations wound,
And fill Heaven's conclave with the mighty sound.

You did at first the warring atoms join,
Made qualities most opposite combine,
While discords did with pleasing concords twine.

The universe you fram'd, you still sustain;
Without you, what in tune does now remain
Would jangle into Chaos once again.

It does your most transcendent glory prove,
That, to complete immortal joys above,
There must be harmony to crown their love.

Dirges with sorrow still inspire
The doleful and lamenting choir,
With swelling hearts and closing eyes,
They solemnise their obsequies;
For grief they frequent discords choose,
Long bindings and chromatics use.
Organs and viols sadly groan
To the voices' dismal tone.

If Love's gentle passions we
Express, there must be harmony;
We touch the soft and tender flute,
The sprinkling and melodious lute,

When we describe the tickling smart
Which does invade a love-sick heart :
Sweet nymphs in pretty murmurs plain,
All chill and panting with the pleasing pain,
Which can be eas'd by nothing but the swain.

If poets in a lofty epic strain,
Some ancient noble history recite,
How heroes love, and puissant conquerors fight,
Or how of cruel fortune they complain ;
Or if the muse the fate of empires sings
The change of crowns, the rise and fall of kings ;

CHORUS.

This sacred music does impart
Life and vigour to the art ;
It makes the dumb poetic pictures breathe,
Victors and poet's names it saves from death.

How does the thundering martial song
Provoke the military throng !
The hautboys and the warlike fife,
With clamours of the deafening drum,
Make peasants bravely hazard life
And quicken those whom fears bemoan !
The clangour of the trumpets' sound
Fills all the dusty place around,
And does from neighbouring hills rebound :
To triumph when we sing,
We make the trembling valleys ring.

GRAND CHORUS.

All instruments and voices fit the choir,
While we enchanting harmony admire.
What mighty wonders by our arts are taught,
What miracles by sacred numbers wrought,
On earth : in heaven, no joys are perfect found,
Till by celestial harmony they're crown'd.

FROM THE INNOCENT IMPOSTORS.

How long must women wait in vain
A constant love to find ?
No art can fickle man retain,
Or fix a roving mind.



"BUT OH! THE TORMENT TO DISCERN
A PERJURED LOVER GONE."—*Page* 59.

Yet fondly we ourselves deceive,
And empty hopes pursue:
Though false to others, we believe
They will to us prove true.

But oh! the torment to discern
A perjured lover gone;
And yet by sad experience learn
That we must still love on.

How strangely are we fool'd by fate,
Who tread the maze of love:
When most desirous to retreat,
We know not how to move.

ON DRYDEN'S HEROIC TRAGEDIES.

BUT of these ladies he despairs to-day
Who love a dull, romantic, whining play:
Where poor frail woman's made a deity,
With senseless, fond idolatry.
And love-sick heroes sigh and pine and cry,
Though singly they beat armies and huff kings,
Rant at the gods and do impossible things;
Though they can laugh at danger, blood and wounds,
Yet if the dame once chides, the milksop hero swoons:
—*Epilogue to The Virtuoso.*

SATIRICAL LINES ON DRYDEN.

How long shall I endure without reply,
To hear this Bayes, this hackney-rayler lie?
The fool uncudgelled for one libel, swells,
Where not his wit, but sauciness excells;
Whilst with foul words and names which he lets flie,
He quite defiles the satyr's dignity.
For libel and true satyr different be,
This must have truth and salt with modesty.
Sparing the persons, this does tax the crimes,
Galls not great men, but vices of the times,
With witty and sharp—not blunt and bitter rhymes.
Methinks the ghost of Horace there I see,
Lashing this cherry-cheeked dunce of fifty-three.
Who, at that age, so boldly durst profane,
With base hir'd libel, the free satyr's vein. . .

An oyster wench is sure thy muse of late,
And all thy Helicon's at Billingsgate. . .
As far from satyr does thy talent lye,
As far from being cheerful, or good company;
For thou art *Saturnine*, thou dost confess
A civil word thy *dulness* to express. . .
Now farewell, wretched, mercenary Bayes,
Who the king libell'd, and did Cromwell praise;
Farewell, abandoned rascal, only fit
To be abused by thy own scurrilous wit.
—*The Medal of John Bayes.*

ON BEN JONSON.

HE was incomparably the best dramatic poet that ever was, or, I believe, ever will be; and I had rather be the author of one scene in his best comedies than of any play this age has produced.

ON BEN JONSON.

THE mighty Prince of Poets, learned Ben,
Who alone dived into the minds of men,
Saw all their wanderings, all their follies knew,
And all their vain fantastic passions drew.
'Twas he alone true humours understood,
And with great wit and judgment made them good.
—*Dedication to The Virtuoso.*



"RETIRED FROM ANY MORTAL'S SIGHT,
THE PENSIVE DAMON LAY."—*Page* 68.

NAHUM TATE.

Born in Dublin in 1652. Made laureate in 1692. Died in 1715.

(Reigns of William III., Anne., and George I.)

NAHUM TATE belonged to a family of clergymen, but all his tastes were for a life radically different from theirs. He had considerable poetic ambition, though his soul longed the most intensely for political distinction. A son of Dr. Faithful Teat, who afterwards changed his name to Tate, he was born in Dublin, passed a happy childhood, and did well at school and managed to matriculate at Trinity College, but he did not distinguish himself for his scholarship, and it is not known whether he took his degree. Drawn to London by an irresistible magnet, he left his native city, and seldom visited it afterward. When he first began to try his fortunes in the field of literature he was fortunate in securing the friendship of the great Dryden, and through him he soon obtained the patronage of Lord Dorset. Tate's first volume of poems did not pay him very well, so he began to write for the stage. With the fulsome flattery so common among all the poets of the day, he dedicated his first tragedy to Lord Dorset. This was "Brutus of Alba, or the Enchanted Lovers." The plot was a curious blending of Virgil, of ancient legendary lore, and of ideas current in the reign of William and Mary. The dedication to Dorset and the prologue written by Dryden helped Tate to such an extent that his bark seemed well launched on a sea of glory. Tate's object was no higher than simply to entertain his audiences. There was no lofty moral motive to his work. He wished to get on in the world, he would therefore drift with the tide of public opinion; he aspired to the favour of the rich and the great, therefore he would not venture to satirise their weaknesses or vices. He would simply paint life as he saw it, and, by adding certain imaginative touches, he would make his picture as bright and charming as possible.

The most popular writers of the day did not scruple to take the plots of Shakespeare and Jonson and other old dramatists, and remodel them to suit their own convenience. It was an open secret that Tate borrowed right and left. He even

assumed to alter Shakespeare. Garrick and Colman refused to act "Lear" as Tate changed it, but Kemble preferred Tate's version, and it held the stage for many years. It seemed to be from no lack of respect that Tate thus ventured to tamper with the great master's work. He only sought to make it more popular with an age that in many respects was incapable of appreciating the highest and best in dramatic art. That Tate adapted "Richard II." and "Coriolanus," as well as "Lear," to his own notions of propriety, excited both the indignation and the contempt of Southey, and yet he felt more inclined to excuse "poor Nahum," as he called him, than to excuse Dryden's and Davenant's obtuseness of feeling—men of whom loftier poetic ideals would be expected—when they joined in "interpolating 'The Tempest' with their own base inventions." Tate boldly justified his alterations of "Lear." He described the original as a heap of jewels unstrung and unpolished, which he could reduce to order only by interpolating the text. For instance he introduced a love scene between Edgar and Cordelia which is utterly foreign to the spirit of the tragedy; and he also cut out many fine and noble scenes. Addison considered the play thus lost half its beauty, but the public liked Tate's version better than the purity of the original, and once an attempt being made at Covent Garden to act the play as Shakespeare wrote it, the result was total failure.

A certain critic, who used a poisoned arrow for his pen, describes Tate as the author of the worst alteration of Shakespeare, the worst version of the Psalms of David, and the worst continuation of a great poem.

This opinion is probably based on the fact that Pope put Tate into the "Dunciad." Pope wrote that Tate leaned alternately to sense and nonsense, that he blundered round a meaning, that his fustian was

> "So sublimely bad
> It is not poetry, but prose run mad."

It is true that a personal study of Tate's work results in disappointment. It is wholly lacking in imagination, has no depth of insight or feeling, except as it shows depth in the borrowed thought with which it is pervaded; yet it contains often wit and fancy, and has much beauty of phrase and of versification. His translations from Juvenal and Ovid have many graces of style, and his own poem called "Panacea" has much artistic excellence. The subject is uninteresting to readers now, concerned as it is with the charms of tea, but in Tate's time tea was a luxury which was very much prized.

Tate's great defect is that he had not only little originality

of thought, but that his metaphors and turns of expression are borrowed right and left. As Pope said:

"He steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left."

Tate's merit is, that, in an age which enjoyed the coarseness of Dryden and Shadwell, he lived a moral and upright life, and reflected that morality in his later poetry. When first he began to write he catered to the taste of the age by the usual coarse allusions in his plays. But as the profligacy of the Restoration gradually grew less, and virtue and religion began once more to be considered of some importance, Tate of course had the good sense to forecast the future and change his methods. And therefore his later poems are not disfigured by the impurity unhappily so prevalent. An admiring friend wrote to him:

"Long may the laurel flourish on your brow
Since you so well a Laureate's duty know,
For virtue's rescue daring to engage,
Against the tyrant vices of the age."

One of Tate's volumes went by the name of "Sacred Miscellanies, or Poems on Divine and Moral Subjects."

Tate's morality was so obtrusive that it gave rise to many bitter satires against him. From choice he mingled little with the wits and dramatists of the time, though with a few chosen companions he was free and jovial. In general society he was, however, taciturn and reserved, showing little trace of brilliancy of mind or ease of manner. His portrait is not extant. He is said to have had a somewhat refined face, with a downcast look, and that in many respects he realised in his personal appearance the drowsy characteristics of his muse.

The worst continuation of a great poem of which Tate was guilty was the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel." But as Tate's satirical powers were altogether too feeble for such invective, Dryden put in two hundred lines of bitter abuse of Shadwell. These lines are "as plainly distinguishable from the rest as a patch of gold upon cloth of frieze," says an admirer of Dryden.

The success of this literary partnership made Tate ever afterward seek the help of others in his work. Tate's chief title to fame rests upon his version of the Psalms. His helper was Dr. Brady, the court chaplain. This version appeared in 1696, one hundred and thirty-four years after the appearance of the version of Sternhold and Hopkins.

It was received with suspicion by conservative people, and a storm of hostile criticism was provoked; but it grew steadily in favour, and gradually supplanted the old version, which was inadequate and obsolete.

It was authorised by King William and recommended by the Bishop of London, but it was never imposed upon the English Church. But many of these Psalms have found a place in modern hymn books. The Church at large makes use of Tate's version of Psalm xlii., set to music by Spohr. It is certainly a most beautiful rendering of the original:

"As pants the hart for cooling streams
When wearied in the chase."

It is even surpassed by Psalm civ. Tate's imagery here is exquisite.

When Shadwell died in 1692, Dryden urged the claims of William Congreve, but by this time the Laureateship had ceased to have any special significance as a tribute to poetic genius. It was a mere official gift, dependent either upon patronage or the possession of certain political opinions. William III. was not a lover of the stage like Charles II. It is said that never once during his reign did he even enter a theatre. He could therefore have little appreciation of the genius of Congreve. But Tate's political ideas, his commendable life, and his willingness to eulogise his Majesty made the king quite willing to listen to his Lord Chamberlain, who was none other than Dorset, Tate's patron from the very beginning of his career. So it was not surprising that Tate received the laurel crown.

Tate's laureate odes have been commended for their brevity, and criticised for their weakness and their abject and fulsome flattery. They pleased the king, however, and he had them set to music by the court organist and sung in the Royal chapel. Tate's Elegy on the death of Queen Mary was one of the best things he ever wrote. Tate lived to mourn the death of William also; but Queen Anne retained him as laureate, issued new letters patent, and placed the gift of the laurel in the hands of the Lord Chamberlain, independent of the crown.

Tate's records of the notable events of Anne's reign, the victories of Marlborough, etc., were really creditable. They were events certainly grand enough to stir up poetic ardour and passion. And yet how far removed from genius are Tate's odes!

Dr. Johnson made the assertion that when Queen Anne died the laurel was torn from Tate's unwilling hands and given to Nicholas Rowe. But the assertion is not correct. The same mistake has been repeated by several writers on the laureates. George I. ascended the throne in 1714, and Tate was officially reappointed laureate, and wrote one ode for George. The date of Rowe's appointment is 1715, the year of Tate's death.

Some enemies said that Tate in his later years became

intemperate, but this has never been proved. But one folly he had committed, and it was not consistent with his worldly wisdom or his retired life. He had been very extravagant, and after Dorset's death became very much embarrassed. The *Monitor*,—a penny paper projected two years before his death,—of which he became editor, did not succeed as he hoped it might. He became bankrupt. There was no one to relieve him, now Dorset, Dryden and other friends were in their graves, and poor Tate's last days were sad in the extreme. Burdened with debt, ill and discouraged, he sought refuge from his creditors in the old Mint, Southwark, and died there in great misery in 1715. His life could indeed point a moral and adorn a tale.

SELECTIONS FROM TATE.

CHARLES II.

How great are the blessings of government made
By the excellent rule of our prince,
Who, while trouble and cares do his pleasures invade,
To his people all joy does dispense:
And while he for us carking and thinking,
We have nothing to mind but our shops and our trade,
And then to divert us with drinking.

From him we derive all our pleasure and wealth.
Then fill me a glass—nay, fill it up higher,
My soul is athirst for His Majesty's health;
And an ocean of drink can't quench my desire,
Since all we enjoy to his bounty we owe,
'Tis fit all our bumpers like that should o'erflow.

ON THE DEATH OF QUEEN MARY II.

With robes invested of celestial dies,
She towers and treads the empyrean skies;
Angelic choirs, skilled in triumphant song,
Heaven's battlements and crystal turrets throng.
The signal's given, the eternal gates unfold,
Burning with jasper, wreathed in burnish'd gold:
And myriads now of flaming minds I see—
Pow'rs, Potentates, heaven's awful Hierarchy
In gradual orbs enthroned, but all divine
Ineffably those sons of glory shine.

CHORUS FROM THE ODE FOR THE YEAR 1705.

While Anne and George their empire maintain
Of the land and the main,
And a Marlborough fights,
Secure are the rights
Of Albion and Europe in Piety's reign.

THE TEA TABLE.

(*From "Panacea."*)

HAIL, Queen of Plants, pride of Elysian bowers!
How shall we speak thy complicated powers?
Thou wondrous panacea, to assuage
The calentures of youth's fermenting rage,
And animate the freezing veins of age.

To Bacchus, when our griefs repair for ease,
The remedy proves worse than the disease;
Where reason we must lose to keep the round,
And, drinking others' healths, our own confound.
Whilst *tea*, our sorrows safely to beguile,
Sobriety and mirth does reconcile:
For to this nectar we the blessing owe,
To grow more wise as we more cheerful grow.

Whilst Fancy does her brightest beams dispense,
And decent Wit diverts without offence;
Then, in discourse of nature's mystic powers
And noble themes, we pass the well-spent hours.
Whilst all around the virtues, sacred band,
And list'ning graces, pleased attendants stand.
Thus our tea-conversation we employ,
Where, with delight, instruction we enjoy;
Quaffing, without the waste of time or wealth,
The sovereign drink of pleasure and of health.

ON THE SPECTATOR.

Aliusque et idem
Nasceris.—HORACE.
(You rise another and the same.)

WHEN first the Tatler to a mute was turned,
Great Britain for her censor's silence mourned;
Robbed of his sprightly beams, she wept the night,
Till the Spectator rose and blazed as bright.
So the first man the sun's first setting viewed,
And sighed till circling day his joy's renewed.
Yet, doubtful how that second sun to name,
Whether a bright successor, or the same,
So we; but now from this suspense are freed,
Since all agree, who both with judgment read,
'Tis the same sun, and does himself succeed.

FROM THE LOYAL GENERAL.

FRIENDSHIP'S the privilege
Of private men; for wretched greatness knows
No blessing so substantial.

Secure and free they pass their harmless hours,
Gay as the birds that revel in the grove
And sing the morning up.

SONG: DAMON'S MELANCHOLY.

RETIRED from any mortal's sight,
The pensive Damon lay;
He blessed the discontented night
And cursed the smiling day.
The tender sharers of his pain,
His flocks no longer graze,
But sadly fixed around the swain,
Like silent mourners gaze.

He heard the music of the wood,
And with a sigh reply'd;
He saw the fish sport in the flood,
And wept a deeper tide:
In vain the summer bloom came on,
For still the drooping swain,
Like autumn winds, was heard to groan,
Outwept the winter's rain.

"Some ease," said he, "some respite give,
Ah, mighty powers! Ah, why
Am I too much distressed to live,
And yet forbid to die?"
Such accents from the shepherd flew
Whilst on the ground he lay;
At last so deep a sigh he drew
As bore his life away.

ECLOGUE OF VIRGIL.

(The shepherd Corydon woos Alexis; but finding he could not prevail, resolves to follow his affairs, and forget his passion.)

A HOPELESS flame did Corydon destroy,
The lov'd Alexis was his master's joy,
No respite from his grief the shepherd knew,
But daily walk'd where shady bushes grew;



"THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CAME DOWN."—*Page* 69.

Where, stretch'd on earth, alone he thus complains,
And in these accents tells the groves his pains:
Cruel Alexis! has thou no remorse?
Must I expire, and have my songs no force? . .
'Tis Pan preserves the sheep and shepherd too.
Disdain not then the tuneful reed to ply,
Nor scorn the pastime of a deity.
What talk would not Amyntas undergo,
For half the noble skill I offer you? . . .
Come to my arms, thou lovely boy, and take
The richest presents that the spring can make.
See how the nymphs with lilies wait on thee;
Fair Naïs, scarce thyself so fair as she,
With poppies, daffodils, and violets join'd,
A garland for thy softer brow has twin'd.
Myself with downy peaches will appear,
And chestnuts, Amaryllis' dainty cheer;
I'll crop my laurel, and my myrtle tree,
Together bound, because their sweets agree.

THE TEAR.

I WILL convert
This tear to a gem—'tis feasible;
For laid near Julia's broken heart
'Twill to a diamond congeal:
And yet if I consider well,
These tears of Julia can forbode no ill—
The frost is breaking when such drops distil.

THE UPRIGHT MAN.

THOUGH whirled by storms the racking clouds are seen,
His unmolested breast is all serene.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

WHILE shepherds watch'd their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

"Fear not," said he (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind);
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

"To you, in David's town this day,
Is born of David's line,
The Saviour, who is Christ the Lord,
And this shall be the sign.

"The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view display'd,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid."

Thus spake the Seraph; and forthwith
Appear'd a shining throng
Of angels, praising God, and thus
Address'd their joyful song:

"All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Good will henceforth from Heaven to men
Begin, and never cease!"

HYMN.

THROUGH all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.

The hosts of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just;
Deliverance he affords to all
Who on His succour trust.

Oh, make but trial of His love,
Experience will decide,
How blest are they, and only they,
Who in His truth confide.

Fear Him, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you His service your delight,
Your wants shall be His care.

For God preserves the souls of those
Who on His truth depend,
To them and their posterity
His blessings shall descend.

PSALM XLII.

As pants the hart for cooling streams,
When heated in the chase,
So longs my soul, O God for Thee,
And Thy refreshing grace.

For Thee, my God, the living God,
My thirsty soul doth pine;
Oh, when shall I behold Thy face,
Thou Majesty Divine?

Why restless, why cast down, my soul?
Trust God, and He'll employ
His aid for thee, and change these sighs
To thankful hymns of joy.

God of my strength, how long shall I,
Like one forgotten, mourn;
Forlorn, forsaken, and exposed
To my oppressor's scorn?

My heart is pierced, as with a sword,
While thus my foes upbraid.
"Vain boaster, where is now thy God?
And where His promised aid?"

Why restless, why cast down, my soul?
Hope still, and thou shalt sing
The praise of Him who is thy God,
Thy health's eternal Spring.

FROM PSALM XCV.

Oh come, loud anthems let us sing,
Loud thanks to our Almighty King!
For we our voices high should raise
When our Salvation's Rock we praise.

FROM PSALM C.

With one consent let all the earth
To God their cheerful voices raise—
Glad homage pay with awful mirth,
And sing before him songs of praise—

For He's the Lord supremely good,
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth, which all times firmly stood,
To endless ages shall endure.

FROM PSALM CIV.

BLESS God, my soul! Thou, Lord, alone
Possessest empire without bounds;
With honour Thou art crown'd, Thy throne
Eternal majesty surrounds.

With light Thou dost Thyself enrobe,
And glory for a garment take;
Heaven's curtains stretch beyond the globe,
Thy canopy of state to make.

God builds on limpid air, and forms
His palace-chambers in the skies;
The clouds His chariots are, and storms
The swift-winged steeds with which he flies.

As bright as flame, as swift as wind,
His ministers heaven's palace fill;
All have their sundry tasks assign'd
All proud to serve their Sovereign's will.

The various troops of sea and land
In sense of common want agree;
All wait on Thy dispensing hand,
And have their daily alms from Thee.

. . . . . .

Thus through successive ages stands,
Firm fixed, Thy providential care;
Pleased with the work of Thy own hands,
Thou dost the wastes of time repair.

SELECTIONS FROM PSALMS.

Untimely grave.
—*Psalm vii.*

And though He promise to his loss,
He makes His promise good.
—*Psalm xv.*

The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust.
—*Psalm cxii.*

SELECTION FROM AN ESSAY FOR PROMOTING PSALMODY.

O QUEEN of Sacred Harmony,
How powerful are thy charms!
Care shuns thy walks, Fear kindles with courage,
And joy sublimes into ecstasy.
What! Shall stage syrens sing and Psalmody sleep?
Theatres be thronged and thy temples empty?
Shall thy votaries abroad find heart and voice
To sing in the fiery furnace of persecution,
Upon the waters of affliction,
And our Britons sit sullenly silent
Under their vines and fig trees?

NICHOLAS ROWE.

Born at Little Beckford, Bedfordshire, in 1674. Made laureate in 1715. Died in 1718.

(Reign of George I.)

TATE'S successor was a far better poet, and he was also a more prosperous and happy man. His happiness, however, was not due to the gift of the laurel, for he wore it only three short years. Rowe belonged to a good family, and his advent into the world brought great joy to affectionate parents. In the garden adjoining the house where he was born there has been erected a stone to his memory. The boy was clever and fond of books, and won distinction at Westminster School, where Dr. Busby of birchen fame alternately abused and praised his pupils. At sixteen, when Rowe entered the Middle Temple, he plunged with zest into the study of law, but general literature soon proved so alluring and he showed such taste and intellectual superiority in its study, that law soon lost its hold upon him. Then, as always afterward, he showed especial skill in foreign languages. His knowledge was profound and thorough, and this knowledge not only improved his taste and made him a good translator, but was of great service to him as an original worker in the field of dramatic art.

The death of Rowe's father made him not only independent, but wealthy, and he soon gave up his brilliant prospects of fame as a lawyer for the more uncertain rewards of literature. At the age of twenty-five he entered into competition with the brilliant circle of dramatists in London, by publishing a play called "The Ambitious Stepmother." In this we see a great advance upon the work of any dramatist since the death of Davenant. The sentiment of this play is noble and dignified, its moral influence good, while the language is refined and has much grace and beauty. Congreve praised it, and Betterton, Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Bracegirdle were enthusiastic actors of it. Thus Rowe stepped at once into a successful career. Rowe's handsome face and figure, his vivacious talk, his charming manners soon won him many friends, not only among men of



NICHOLAS ROWE.

letters, but among the social dignitaries of the great city. After his death Amhurst wrote:

> "Enough for him that Congreve was his friend,
> That Garth and Steele and Addison commend,
> That Brunswick with the bays his temples bound."

The friendship with Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Prior, and others stimulated Rowe's intellectual ardour and widened the range of his knowledge of men and of society, and yet all this knowledge never gave him the skill to write a good comedy; when he attempted it, he failed signally. But he had the good sense to perceive wherein his strength and his weakness lay. His second tragedy was probably the indirect cause of his being appointed laureate. In this play he catered to the popular hatred of France, and he complimented King William in language both enthusiastic and animated. "Tamerlane" became very popular, and was performed on every birthday of the king and on every anniversary of his landing on British soil. The success of "Tamerlane" was followed by that of "The Fair Penitent." Its principal character—Lothario—has become a household word, the immortal type of the careless, faithless lover. And we can trace a resemblance in it to Richardson's famous Lovelace. To Rowe's devotion to tragedy alone we owe "Jane Shore" and "Lady Jane Grey." The tenderness, the grace, the pathos of these plays show how thorough and affectionate had been Rowe's study of the great Elizabethan drama. The proof of Rowe's power is in the fact that they held the stage so long and were so popular even in the age other than his own. *Jane Shore* was one of the great Sarah Siddons' favourite characters. Sir James Mackintosh spoke with great feeling of the way she acted it, but he added that even were the play never seen upon the stage, but simply read, it would prove itself to be most thrilling poetry, dealing as it does with some of the most touching phases of remorse and pain. But with all the genuine power of these two great tragedies, Rowe's chief distinction in the history of English literature lies in the fact that he was the first to bring out an edition of Shakespeare, and to inaugurate that revival of the legitimate Shakespearean drama which gave Shakespeare his rightful place in the hearts of the people. His admiration of Shakespeare was honest and sincere, and the effect of that admiration is seen in the excellence of his own work.

Rowe had several important offices which brought him both influence and money; he was under-secretary to the Duke of Queensbury, clerk of the Council to the Prince of Wales, etc. It was therefore not surprising that on the death of Tate, the Lord Chamberlain should select this handsome, courtly, and

popular poet to be laureate. The odes Rowe wrote have a good deal of poetic vigour and eloquence, and give animation and grace to themes essentially conventional and commonplace. It must be remembered that he wrote these odes for only three short years, whereas poor Tate had been obliged to grind them out for three-and-twenty years. Perhaps Rowe's inspiration would have failed him under such pressure. His odes, few as they are, have that glow and passion, and that eloquence of versification which are absent from those of Tate or of any of Rowe's successors in the Laureateship till Thomas Warton appeared. And yet Rowe's poetry would have been called by Macaulay a fair example of the critical poetry of his age, the "poetry to which the memory, the judgment, and the wit contribute far more than the imagination."

There were few lampoons directed against Rowe. His charm of manner, his magnetism of character, made him a favourite with all the wits who usually write such things. Though not strictly domestic in his habits, his gay and vivacious disposition leading him much into the life of the court and of London society, he lived comparitively free from the vices and extravagances of his time. He was married twice, and this in spite of the fact that Pope thought him heartless, and Addison considered his heart of very light material. A son and daughter made him very happy, and the latter inherited much of her father's beauty of person and brilliancy of mind. She won such a reputation that on her death an inscription to her was put beneath the inscription upon her father's monument in Westminster Abbey.

This poet, so rich in friends and in all that makes life desirable, who was, as Pope said, seldom grave, but would laugh all day long, and do nothing else but laugh, had to bid the world good-night at the early age of forty-five. The funeral service was read by the famous Bishop Atterbury, who had been a schoolfellow of the poet years before. He was buried near Chaucer in the Poet's Corner, and Pope wrote an epitaph beginning:

> "Thy relics, Rowe, to this fair urn we trust,
> And sacred place by Dryden's awful dust. . . .
> Peace to thy gentle shade, and endless rest!"

Pope subsequently changed the epitaph to one much longer but not so fine.

SELECTIONS FROM ROWE.

ODE FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1717.

WINTER! thou hoary, venerable sire,
All richly in thy furry mantle clad;
What thoughts of mirth can feeble age inspire
To make thy careful wrinkled brow so glad?

Now I see the reason plain;
Now I see the jolly train:
Snowy headed Winter leads;
Spring and Summer next succeeds;
Yellow Autumn brings the rear.
Thou art father of the year.

While from the frosty mellow'd earth
Abounding Plenty takes her birth,
The conscious sire exulting sees
The seasons spread their rich increase;
So dusky night and chaos smil'd
On beauteous form, their lovely child.

O fair variety!
What bliss thou dost supply!
The foul brings forth the fair
To deck the changing year,
When our old pleasures die,
Some new one still is nigh;
O fair variety!

Our passions, like the seasons, turn,
And now we laugh, and now we mourn.
Britannia, late oppress'd with dread,
Hung her declining, drooping head:
A better visage now she wears,
And now at once she quits her fears:
Strife and war no more she knows,
Rebel sons, nor foreign foes.

Safe beneath her mighty master,
In security she sits;
Plants her loose foundations faster,
And her sorrows past forgets.

Happy isle! the care of Heaven,
To the guardian hero given,
Unrepining still obey him;
Still with love and duty pay him.

Though he parted from thy shore
While contesting kings attend him;
Could he, Britain, give thee more
Than the pledge he left behind him?

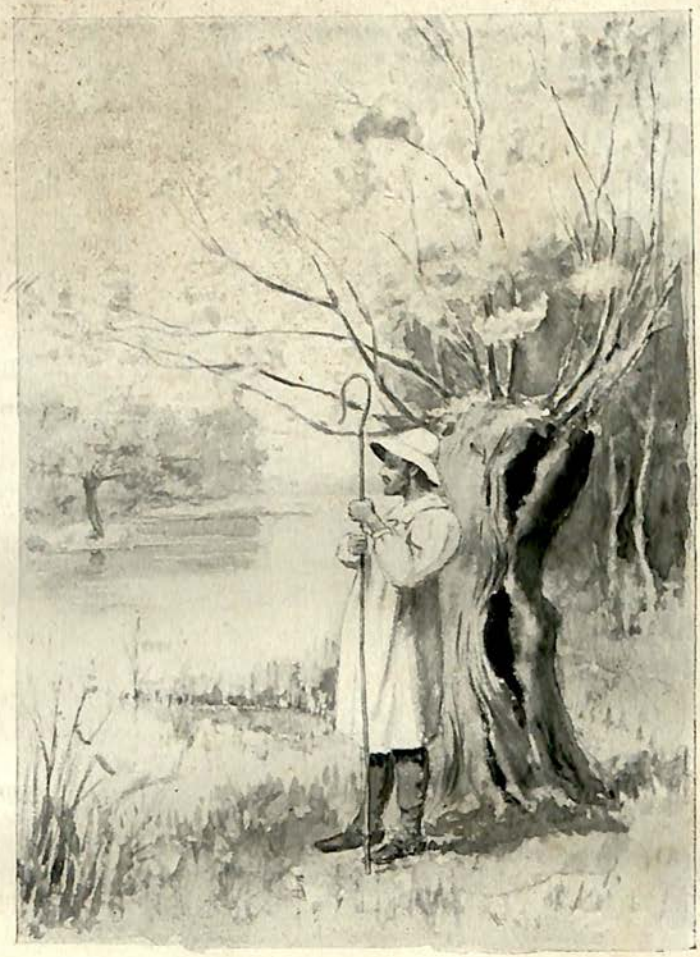
COLIN'S COMPLAINT.

DESPAIRING beside a clear stream,
A shepherd forsaken was laid;
And while a false nymph was his theme,
A willow supported his head.
The wind that blew over the plain,
To his sighs with a sigh did reply;
And to the brook, in return to his pain,
Ran mournfully murmuring by.

Alas! silly swain that I was!
Thus sadly complaining he cried;
When first I beheld that fair face,
'Twere better by far I had died:
She talked and I blessed her dear tongue;
When she smiled, 'twas a pleasure too great;
I listened, and cried when she sung,
Was nightingale ever so sweet?

How foolish was I to believe
She could dote on so lowly a clown,
Or that her fond heart would not grieve
To forsake the fine folk of the town;
To think that a beauty so gay,
So kind and so constant would prove;
Or so clad, like our maidens, in gray,
Or live in a cottage on love!

What though I have skill to complain,
Though the muses my temples have crown'd;
What though, when they hear my soft strain,
The virgins sit weeping around?



"TO THE BROOK AND THE WILLOW THAT HEARD HIM COMPLAIN."
—*Page* 79.

Ah! Colin! thy hopes are in vain,
  Thy pipe and thy laurel resign,
Thy false one inclines to a swain
  Whose music is sweeter than thine.

All you, my companions so dear,
  Who sorrow to see me betray'd,
Whatever I suffer, forbear,
  Forbear to accuse the false maid.
Though through the wide world I should range,
  'Tis in vain from my fortune to fly;
'Twas hers to be false and to change,
  'Tis mine to be constant and die.

If while my hard fate I sustain,
  In her breast any pity is found,
Let her come with the nymphs of the plain,
  And see me laid low in the ground:
The last humble boon that I crave,
  Is to shade me with cypress and yew;
And when she looks down on my grave,
  Let her own that her shepherd was true.

Then to her new love let her go,
  And deck her in golden array;
Be finest at every fine show,
  And frolic it all the long day:
While Colin, forgotten and gone,
  No more shall be talked of or seen,
Unless when, beneath the pale moon,
  His ghost shall glide over the green.

II

SONG.

To the brook and the willow that heard him complain,
  Ah, willow! willow!
Poor Colin went weeping and told them his pain.
Sweet stream! he cry'd, sadly, I'll teach thee to flow,
And the waters shall rise to the brink with my woe.
All restless and painful my Celia now lies,
And counts the sad moments of time as it flies:
To the nymph, my heart's love, ye soft slumbers repair,
Spread your downy wings o'er her and make her your care;
Let me be left restless, mine eyes never close,
To the sleep that I lose give my dear one repose.

Sweet stream! if you chance by her pillow to creep,
Perhaps your soft murmurs may lull her to sleep.
But if I am doom'd to be wretched, indeed,
And the loss of my charmer the fates have decreed,
Believe me, thou fair one, thou dear one, believe,
Few sighs to thy loss, and few tears will I give;
One fate to thy Colin and thee shall betide,
And soon lay thy shepherd down by thy cold side.
Then glide, gentle brook, and to lose thyself haste,
Bear this to my willow; this verse is my last.
Ah, willow! willow! Ah, willow! willow!

ULYSSES.

LEARN to dissemble wrongs, to smile at injuries,
And suffer crimes thou want'st the power to punish:
Be easy, affable, familiar, friendly:
Search and know all mankind's mysterious ways,
But trust the secret of thy soul to none:
This is the way,
This only, to be safe in such a world as this is.
. . . . . .
O love! how are thy precious, sweetest moments
Thus ever crossed, thus vex'd with disappointments!
Now pride, now fickleness, fantastic quarrels,
And sullen coldness, give us pain by turns;
Malicious meddling chance is ever busy
To bring us fears, disquiet and delays;
And ev'n at last, when, after all our waiting,
Eager we think to snatch the dear-bought bliss,
Ambition calls us to its sullen cares,
And honour, stern, impatient of neglect,
Commands us to forget our ease and pleasures,
As if we had been made for nought but toil,
And love were not the business of our lives.

TO MRS. A. D., WHILE SINGING.

WHAT charms in melody are found
To soften every pain!
How do we catch the pleasing sound,
And feel the soothing strain!

Still when I hear thee, O, my fair,
I bid my heart rejoice;
I shake off every sullen care,
For sorrow flies thy voice.



"SHE BIDS THE WINTER FLY AWAY,
AND SHE RECALLS THE SPRING."—*Page* 81.

The seasons Philomel obey,
  Whate'er they hear her sing;
She bids the Winter fly away,
  And she recalls the Spring.

ON MR. BAYES'* DRAMATIC PIECES.

Wit and the Laws had both the same ill fate,
And partial Tyrants sway'd in either state.
Ill-natur'd Censure would be sure to dawn
And alien Wit of independent fame,
While Bayes, grown old, and harden'd in offence,
Was suffer'd to write on in spite of sense;
Back'd by his friends, th' invader brought along
A crew of foreign words into our tongue,
To ruin and enslave the free-born English song,
Still the prevailing faction propt his throne,
And to four volumes let his plays run on.

SELECTION.

Who knows the joys of friendship?
The trust, security, and mutual tenderness,
The double joys, where each is glad for both?
Friendship our only wealth, our last retreat and strength,
Secure against ill-fortune and the world.

STRAY SELECTIONS FROM THE FAIR PENITENT.

As if Misfortune made the throne her seat,
And none could be unhappy but the great.
—Prologue.

At length the morn and cold indifference came.
—Act I.

Is she not more than painting can express,
Or youthful poets fancy when they love?
—Act III.

Is this that haughty gallant, gay Lothario?
—Act V.

* Bayes was Dryden's name in the satirical verse of the day.

STRAY SELECTIONS FROM LADY JANE GREY.

Some secret venom preys upon his heart;
A stubborn and unconquerable flame
Creeps in his veins and drinks the streams of life.

Thou art the man in whom my soul delights,
In whom, next heaven, I trust.

Thou hast prevaricated with thy friend,
By underhand contrivances undone me;
And while my open nature trusted in thee,
Thou hast stepp'd in between me and my hopes,
And ravish'd from me all my soul held dear,
Thou hast betray'd me.

PENITENCE AND DEATH OF JANE SHORE.

Jane Shore, *her Husband, and* Belmour.

Belmour. How fare you, lady?
Jane Shore. My heart is thrilled with horror.
Belmour. Be of courage;
Your husband lives. 'Tis he, my worthiest friend!
Jane Shore. Still art thou there? Still dost thou hover round me?
Oh, save me, Belmour, from his angry shade!
Belmour. 'Tis he himself. He lives! Look up.
Jane Shore. I dare not.
Oh, that my eyes could shut him out forever!
Shore. Am I so hateful, then, so deadly to thee
To blast thy eyes with horror? Since I'm
Grown a burden to the world, myself, and thee,
Would I had ne'er survived to see thee more.
Jane Shore. Oh, thou most injured, dost thou live, indeed?
Fall, then, ye mountains, on my guilty head!
Hide me, ye rocks, within your secret caverns!
Cast thy black veil upon my shame, O night!
And shield me with thy sable wing forever.
Shore. Why dost thou turn away? Why tremble thus?
Why thus indulge thy fears, and in despair
Abandon thy distracted soul to horror?
Cast every black and guilty thought behind thee,
And let 'em never vex thy quiet more.
My arms, my heart, are open to receive thee,

To bring thee back to thy forsaken home,
With tender joy, with fond, forgiving love.
Let us haste.
Now, while occasion seems to smile on us,
Forsake this place of shame and find a shelter.
Jane Shore. What shall I say to you? But I obey.
Shore. Lean on my arm.
Jane Shore. Alas! I'm wondrous faint.
But that's not strange. I have not ate these three days.
Shore. Oh, merciless!
Jane Shore. Oh, I'm sick at heart!
Shore. Thou murderous sorrow!
Would thou still drink her blood, pursue her still?
Must she, then, die? Oh, my poor penitent!
Speak peace to thy sad heart. She hears me not.
Grief masters every sense.

Enter Catesby, *with a* Guard.

Catesby. Seize on 'em both, as traitors to the state!
Belmour. What means this violence?
[Guards *lay hold on* Shore *and* Belmour.
Catesby. Have we not found you,
In scorn of the protector's strict command,
Assisting this base woman and abetting her infamy?
Shore. Infamy on thy head!
Thou tool of power, thou pander to authority!
I tell thee, knave, thou know'st of none so virtuous,
And she that bore thee was an Ethiop to her.
Catesby. You'll answer this at full. Away with 'em!
Shore. Is charity grown treason to your court?
What honest man would live beneath such rulers?
I am content that we should die together.
Catesby. Convey the men to prison; but for her—
Leave her to hunt her fortune as she may.
Jane Shore. I will not part with him. For me—for me?
Oh! must he die for me?
[*Following him as he is carried off.* *She falls.*
Shore. Inhuman villains!
[*Breaks from the* Guards.
—Stand off! The agonies of death are on her.
She pulls, she gripes me hard with her cold hand.
Jane Shore. Was this blow wanting to complete my ruin?
Oh, let me go, ye ministers of terror!
He shall offend no more, for I will die,
And yield obedience to your cruel master.
Tarry a little, but a little longer,
And take my last breath with you.

Shore. Oh, my love!
Why dost thou fix thy dying eyes upon me,
With such an earnest, such a piteous look,
As if thy heart were full of some sad meaning
Thou couldst not speak?
Jane Shore. Forgive me, but forgive me.
Shore. Be witness for me, ye celestial host,
Such mercy and such pardon as my soul
Accords to thee, and begs of heaven to shew thee,
May such befall me at my latest hour,
And make my portion blest or curst forever!
Jane Shore. Then all is well, and I shall sleep in peace,
'Tis very dark, and I have lost you now.
Was there not something I would have bequeathed you?
But I have nothing left me to bestow,
Nothing but one sad sigh.
Oh, mercy, heaven! [*Dies.*



LAWRENCE EUSDEN.

LAWRENCE EUSDEN.

Born at Spotisworth, Yorkshire. Date of birth not definitely known. Made laureate in 1718. Died in 1730.

(Reigns of George I. and George II.)

"PRAISE," said the poet Lee, "is the greatest encouragement we chameleons can pretend to, or rather the manna that keeps soul and body together.; we devour it as if it were angels' food, and vainly think we grow immortal. There is nothing that transports a poet, next to love, like commending in the right place."

Poor Eusden had little commendation to transport him. The abuse heaped upon him by his contemporaries was without palliation—no rays of light relieve the shadows. Cooke spoke of

> "Eusden, a laurelled bard, by fortune raised
> By very few was read, by fewer praised."

The neglect of the present age has been added to what Eusden suffered in his own. He is completely ignored in the Encyclopædia Britannica and other biographical dictionaries. Time has sifted his work to the verge of annihilation, and were it not for the satires upon him written by poets who have themselves become famous, and for the fact that he was laureate, and as such is mentioned in the letters of men like Gray and Mason, even his name would be forgotten.

Southey might far better have ranked Eusden as the lowest of his predecessors, rather than either Tate or Shadwell. And yet Eusden wore the laurel wreath for twelve years!

"Praise," wrote Pope,

> "Praise undeserved is scandal in disguise:
> And when I flatter let my dirty leaves,
> Like journals, odes, and such forgotten things
> As Eusden, Phillips, Settle, wrote of kings,
> Clothe spice, line trunks."

And Oldmixon said: "The putting of the laurel on the head of one who writ such verses will give futurity a very lively idea of the judgment and the justice of those who bestowed it. For of all the galimatias I ever met with, none comes up to some verses of this poet which have as much of the ridiculum and the fustian in them as can well be jumbled together."

This contains in epitome all the numerous criticisms which have been written upon this unfortunate laureate, and a personal study of Eusden's poetry will result in very much the same opinion. His official odes are not only insufferable in their exaltation of royalty, but have even a blasphemous tone opposed to all sentiments of dignity and good taste. He not only flattered and exaggerated, but he showed no tact in the flattery, no method of veiling it by artifice or clever allusion. It all came out unblushingly direct. This is well seen in one of our selections on the accession of George II.

What first tempted Eusden to make verses is not known, unless some hereditary influence, for his father was rector of Spotisworth, and he belonged to a good Irish family. The precise date of the laureate's birth is not known, nor is anything known of his childhood or schooldays. He went to Cambridge and graduated from Trinity College. We may infer that his college career was one of honour, for we are told by Gray that his friends had great hopes of his future. Anyway he attained a knowledge of the classics, which later resulted in a good translation of Ovid. The study of Latin led him on to Italian, and Eusden left in manuscript a Life of Tasso and a translation of his works. He had plunged with great enthusiasm into this very useful literary work, but irregular habits made the execution extend over such a number of years that he lost heart and never had the ambition to publish the result of his labours. Probably hereditary influence determined Eusden's choice of a profession. After leaving Cambridge he took orders, and soon was appointed Chaplain to Lord Willoughby de Broke. In a few years more he obtained the living of Coningsby in Lincolnshire. His sermons were not distinguished for erudition, though at first he seemed animated by an earnest desire to be of benefit to his parish, and his labours were unselfish and faithful. All too soon, however, his fatal propensity toward intemperance manifested itself: his earnestness relaxed; his influence waned, and in Gray's significant words, he who in his youth had been a person of great hopes, turned out at last merely a drunken parson.

In the beginning of his career Eusden had the good fortune to win the favour of Lord Halifax, and after he had rendered Halifax's poem on the Battle of the Boyne into excellent Latin, the relations between the two became one of warm friendship. When the Duke of Newcastle married Lady Godolphin, Eusden honoured him by writing an epithalamium. This highly pleased the duke, and when, as Lord Chamberlain he had the laurel at his disposal he had little hesitation in his choice of Eusden. Eusden had been quite industrious in writing poetry before this honour came to him. His efforts showed no genius, but they

were far better than any of the odes he wrote in his official capacity. Their versification was smooth and flowing, and often there were traces of wit and sprightly humour.

In addition to his poetical labours, Eusden contributed to the *Spectator* and the *Guardian* certain prose articles which mirrored some of the aspects of the age and showed also considerable humour. But all of his work was disfigured by the laxity of expression so characteristic of his century.

The appointment of Eusden to the Laureateship was the occasion of the famous satire written by the Duke of Buckingham in imitation of Suckling's "Session of the Poets." It seems that on the death of Rowe the contest for the vacant position had been very active. Buckingham takes this contest as the subject of his satire. He speaks of a great crowd assembling to crown a new laureate. Apollo comes in state accompanied by his lyre and harp, and abundance of fire. Pope, Cibber, Steele, and Congreve—lampooners, critics, dramatists, and poets rush in like a tide, all with confidence, all flushed with hope. Apollo demurs to granting Steele's wish; confesses that the lashes of Dennis and Gildon have stings, but he couldn't choose beadles and hangmen as kings; he dismisses Pope and Cibber with a smile; Buckingham himself is asked to walk in, but a laureate peer had never been known, and so the kind god cannot break an old rule. The kind god gets somewhat confused by all the clamour, but his doubts as to the bestowal of the crown are at length merged into certainty:

> "At last rushed in Eusden, and cried, who shall have it,
> But I the true Laureat, to whom the King gave it?
> Apollo begged pardon, and granted his claim,
> But vowed, that till then, he had ne'er heard his name."

The record of the twelve years after the bestowal of this honour is one of sadness. Between the intervals of his devotion to the cup that inebriates without giving cheer, Eusden wrote his birthday odes full of tiresome and fulsome flatteries of those in power. These poems have something in them of pathos, being so obviously forced, so faithfully obedient to a ridiculous custom, so untrue to the spirit of true poetry. At irregular times he worked on Tasso, but it and his clerical duties were neglected more and more. When sober he won friends by his kindly ways, though after a time his conceit became somewhat insufferable. The portrait of him which is extant in the British Museum shows the marks of this conceit in the lines of the mouth, and the very position he allowed himself to assume, holding a laurel wreath in both hands. Eusden had the temerity to prophesy that his poetry would be considered sweeter than that of Catullus, Ovid, and Tibullus; but his

friends who were the recipients of this confidential prophecy had little hope that such immortality would be his!

The excesses of Eusden undoubtedly shortened his life, and when the end came, in 1730, there were few to regret him—even the court which had honoured him forgot the beautiful and sweet things he had written, and turned with zest to listen to the voice of another.

Pope wrote:

> "Know Eusden thirsts no more for sack or praise;
> He sleeps among the dull of ancient days. . .
> Safe, where no critics damn, no duns molest,
> Where wretched Withers, Ward, and Gildon rest.
> Thou, Cibber! Thou his laurel shalt support,
> Folly, my son, has still a friend at court."

SELECTIONS FROM EUSDEN.

A POEM ON THE HAPPY SUCCESSION AND CORONATION OF HIS PRESENT MAJESTY, KING GEORGE II.

So when great Brunswick yielded to his fate,
O'ercast and cheerless was Britannia's state;
Her cheeks to lose their bloomy hue began,
And all her roses vanished with the sun.
Till a new Brunswick, with an equal ray,
Recalled at once her beauties, and the day,
Firm and unchanged, the spires and turrets stand,
Religion, join'd with Liberty's fair hand,
In triumph walk, and bless with wonted smiles, the land.
Hail, mighty monarch! whose desert alone
Would without birthright raise thee to a throne.
Thy virtues shine peculiarly nice,
Ungloomed with a confinity to vice,
What strains shall equal to thy glories rise,
First of the world and borderer on the skies?
How exquisitely great, who canst inspire
Such joys, that Albion mourns no more thy sire?
Thy sire! a Prince she loved to that degree,
She almost trespassed to the Deity.
Imperial weight he bore with so much ease,
Who but thyself would not despair to please?
A dull, fat, thoughtless heir, unheeded springs
From a long, slothful line of restive kings
And thrones, inur'd to a tyrannic race,
Think a new tyrant not a new disgrace,
Tho' by the change the state no bliss receives,
And Nero dies in vain, if Otho lives.
But when a stem, with fruitful branches crowned,
Still ever seem (if they survive or fall),
All heroes and their country's fathers all,
His great forerunners when the last outshone,
Who could a brighter hope, or ev'n as bright a son?

Old Rome, with tears the younger Scipio viewed,
Who not in fame her African renew'd.
Avaunt, degenerate grafts, or spurious breed,
'Tis a George only can a George succeed;
The shafts of Death, the Pelian art have found,
They bring at once the balm that give the wound.

Such to Britannia is her king
As the softly murmuring spring.

CHORUS.

Genius! now securely rest,
We shall evermore be blest.
Thou thy guardianship may spare,
Britannia is a Brunswick's care!

GEORGE II.

A MARVELLOUS child most precious sweet,
For deeds heroic, glorious from his birth,
The Rhine, the wide-spread Earth,
His praises send most meet.
His deeds to mountains name
Have lent since here to earth he came.

Streams which in silence flowed obscure before,
Swell'd by his conquests, proudly learn'd to roar.

THE COURTIER. A FABLE.

A MILK-WHITE rogue, immortal and unchang'd,
By Fate and Parliaments severely bang'd,
Without a Saint, a Devil was within;
He fought all dangers, for he knew all sin.
Resolv'd for grandeur, and to acquire wealth,
Robb'd some by force, and others trick'd by stealth;
A wheedling, fawning, parsimonious knave,
The prince's favour he resolv'd to have.
The only means by which he thought to rise,
He shuffl'd cards and slyly cogg'd his dice;
A true state juggler could make things appear
Such as would please his prince's eye or ear;
Produc'd false lights his monarch to mislead,
Which made him from his paths of interest tread,

He screen'd all villains from due course of laws,
And from his prince his truest subjects draws;
Till angry senates the vile monster took,
And from the root the upstart cedar shook,
Squeez'd the curst sponge had suck'd the nation's coin,
And made him cast up what he did purloin:
Then on a gibbet did the monster die,
A just example to posterity.

THE MORAL.

LET favourites beware how they abuse
Their prince's goodness or the people's laws:
How they clandestine methods ever use
To propagate a wrong unrighteous cause.

The prince's favour, like a horse untam'd,
Does often break the giddy rider's neck:
On him who for preferments so much fam'd,
The people oft their bloody vengeance wreak.

Let these beware how they mislead their prince,
Or rob the treasure of a potent nation,
(Or multiply enormous armies: from hence)
Come hanging oft, or noble decollation.

TO MR. ——

YOU ask, my friend, how I can Delia prize,
When Myra's shape I view, or Cynthia's eyes;
No tedious answer shall create your pain,
For beauty if but beauty, I disdain.
'Tis not a mien that can my will control,
A speaking body with a silent soul.
The loveliest face to me not lovely shows,
From the sweet lips if melting nonsense flows
Nor must the tuneful Chloris be my choice,
An earthly mind ill suits a heavenly voice.
What though my Delia not decay'd appears,
She wants, you cry, the gaudy bloom of years.
True; but good sense perpetual joys will bring:
Her wit is ever youthful as the spring.

. . . . . .

So kneels at some fam'd antiquated shrine,
The pious pilgrim to the power divine.

Around he sees wild rugged heaps of stone,
Where Parian marble once and jasper shone:
Yet, conscious what those ruins were of old,
Dares not, unwoo'd, the mossy walls behold;
But trembles at the Deity's abode,
And owns the powerful presence of the God.

ON THE SPECTATOR'S CRITIQUE ON MILTON.

LOOK here, ye pedants, who deserve that name,
And lewdly ravish the great critic's fame.
In cloudless beams of light true judgment plays,
How mild the censure, how refin'd the praise!
Beauties ye pass, and blemishes ye cull,
Profoundly read and eminently dull.
Though linnets sing, yet owls feel no delight;
For they the best can judge who best can write.
O! had great Milton but surviv'd to hear
His numbers try'd by such a tuneful ear;
How would he all thy just remarks commend!
The more the critic, own the more the friend.
But, did he know once your immortal strain,
Th' exalted pleasure would increase to pain;
He would not blush for faults he rarely knew,
But blush for glories thus excell'd by you.

TO THE REVEREND DR. BENTLEY.

(*On opening Trinity College chapel.*)

LONG have we, safe, Time's envious fury scorn'd,
By kings first founded, then by kings adorn'd;
If fainting e'er we fear'd a fatal close
Some new Mæcenas with new life arose.
Fretted by age, we still the stronger grow,
And to our ruins all our beauties owe.
So cassia roughly chaf'd the sweeter smells,
And silver more consum'd in brightness more excels.
Rais'd on high columns the proud fabric stands,
Where Barrow praise from every tongue commands;
Where the vast treasures of the learn'd are shown;
No works more rich, more noble, than his own.
The Muses soon the stately feat admir'd,
And in full transports their glad sons inspir'd:
Their sons, inspir'd, sung loud, and all around
Echo redoubled back the cheerful sound;

Sweet was the song, when lays (if such they give)
Worthy of cedar shall in cedar live,
This sumptuous pile show'd the brave founder's mind
But equal labours still remain behind.
God's sacred house too long neglected lies,
And from some other Jonah wants supplies;
But none was found, till you resolv'd to show
How far exalted piety could go:
From little funds so largely to design,
Yet to make all in full perfection shine,
Great is the glory, and the glory's thine!
Of old a joy in every face was seen,
Flush'd by the promise of a bounteous queen.
She vow'd a temple; but too soon her breath
Vanish'd, and seal'd her pious vows in death;
Thus David drew the scheme, but not begun;
The dome was builded by his wiser son.
Not so we far'd. Though by Eliza lov'd,
Her sister's thoughts were lost, but not disprov'd,
Till now we mourn'd our fate, but mourn no more;
Chac'd are the mists, which dull'd the light before.
New golden censers on new altars blaze,
New music sounds the great Creator's praise.
Angels again from Heaven might listening stray,
Did but another sweet Cecilia play.

. . . . . .

Much more we see, and, silent with surprise
Recall times past, and scarce believe our eyes;
How gloomy once these hallow'd mansions were,
But now how wondrous lovely, how divinely fair!
So quickly, where the fragrant dust was spread,
Riseth the Phœnix from the spicy bed;
Or such the change the witty poet's figur'd
When hoary Æson his young bloom regain'd
He but regain'd what was before his own,
While here are beauties seen, till now unknown.
If it so charms, how can we ever show
Thy matchless worth, to whom those charms we owe,
Our vain essays our weakness may proclaim,
But not enlarge the circle of thy fame.
Praises from some delusive may appear;
When foes extol, we need no flatteries fear,
The stubborn Atheist a fierce shock has felt;
Steel'd though he was, he now begins to melt:
Since thus he sees all prejudice remov'd,
Thy acts confess the God thy learning prov'd.

MEDEA. ACT IV. LAST CHORUS.

(*From the Greek of Euripides.*)

FROM things consider'd with a stricter view,
And deepest thought, this fatal truth I drew:
Sure of mankind the unmarried part is blest,
By joys too much distinguish'd from the rest.
Suppose there are ('tis but suppose, I fear),
Pleasures which could the nuptial state endear:
Think, thou may'st wish, and every wish enjoy,
A beauteous daughter and a blooming boy;
Still where's the mighty comfort of a wife?
Or what is wanting in a single life?
Pity not ours, nor thus by fate admire;
The bliss we know not, we can ne'er desire.
Yet this advantage on our side we boast,
The good is little, vast the ill we lost.
All hush'd, and calm!—no griefs our ear impair,
Few from the Father's many a griping care;
First, how the child may generously be bred,
Adorn'd with arts, and through each virtue led.
Next, how to crown him with a fair estate,
And so to make him happy, make him great.
Parents from labours to new labours run,
To hoard-up treasures for the darling son:
Yet know not what this darling son may prove,
A roving spendthrift may reward their love.
Not small the evils which we here behold,
But far the greatest still remain untold,
Just when with utmost pain the drudging sire
Has rais'd a fortune answering his desire;
Already the first scene of life is done,
Whom once he call'd his child, he calls his son:
The boy forgotten and the man begun.
Large promises and hopes the youth incite,
His father's glory and his friends' delight:
But sullen clouds involve the brightest day,
While all look on, to some disease a prey,
The lov'd, the wondrous youth untimely pines away
Too well, alas! too well, ye gods, we knew,
Our troubles many, and our pleasures few:
Why needed this fresh plague be added more
To the rich, boundless, miserable store?
The old, as cloy'd with life, to death belong,
But must it rudely seize the young?
In vain we strive; the cruel doom is read,
The blossom's wither'd, and our hopes are fled,



COLLEY CIBBER.

COLLEY CIBBER.

Born in London in 1671. Made laureate in 1730. Died in 1757.

(Reign of George II.)

SIR JOHN DENHAM once made this peculiar request of the king: "Please, your Majesty, do not hang George Withers, but spare his life that it may not be said I am the worst poet alive!" Colley Cibber never went so far as that, but he himself laid no claim to being a poet, and in that respect he was the most modest of men. Nevertheless Cibber was a man of real genius. His name has lived, not because he was made poet laureate and was put into the "Dunciad," but because he was one of the best actors of his time, and he added to our literature some comedies of unmistakable power, which tended to elevate the stage; and also wrote a history of his life which contains many criticisms of subtle and discriminating insight.

Cibber's father was a Dane, who had studied art in Italy and come to England during the Restoration, and there won fame by his fine works in sculpture. He transmitted to his son that taste for art which determined his career. Cibber's mother belonged to the family of Colley—a family of rank which had become impoverished during the Civil War. Cibber was born in London in 1671. At his first school at Grantham, in Lincolnshire, he distinguished himself both for his quickness and his carelessness. His father was ambitious for him, and wanted him to enter Cambridge, but circumstances shaped themselves differently. On his way from school to join his father, the Revolution broke out, and the father had to take up arms. But he showed so little heart that Cibber offered to become his substitute and join the forces of the Earl of Devonshire. He saw no fighting, but many varied and exciting events impressed his susceptible mind and influenced his future dramatic work. When the Prince of Orange was once firmly established upon the throne, Cibber threw down his musket with joy. By this time thoughts of a college career were forgotten. "I saw no happiness in any other life than that of an actor," he says. Accordingly in spite of parental prejudices and wishes he returned to London and joined the Drury Lane Company, and thus he "found his niche." His progress was slow, his apprenticeship long and tedious; but amid discouragements,

rebuffs, poverty, and toil, his gayety and amiability, his buoyancy of temperament, made him happy and content. At last he became known as a comedian of splendid abilities, and success both as an actor and an author crowned his patient effort. His history of his theatrical life is absorbingly interesting, and the glimpses he gives of the famous actors and dramatists with whom he was connected are charming. He delighted to play with Mrs. Barry, and later with the famous Peg Woffington, and their skill but stimulated his own wonderful power. It is said that he seemed to put on the character he was acting, and every limb and gesture spoke the part as truthfully as the words he uttered. His great rôle was the fop or the man of fashion.

But Cibber's success was modified and embittered by the persistent malice of many enemies, who did their best to ruin his reputation by slander and obloquy. His life certainly was not free from error and folly, but the utter profligacy attributed to him is refuted by the whole tenor of his writings. In them he showed a regard for truth and honour, and sobriety of language and of conduct, which could not but have been a reflection of his personal conviction. He did much to reform the stage, to correct prevailing abuses, to counteract its degrading tendencies; he strove in his plays to depict pure and chaste characters, to extol virtue, to cast a slur upon vice, and bring back, also, some of the truth and the dignity and the strength of the Elizabethan drama. Thus Cibber is a fine contrast to Dryden and Shadwell, Wycherley, Etheridge, and Congreve.

Cibber's first comedy was "Love's Last Shift." Lord Dorset considered this the best first play that any author in his memory had produced. And the public received it with great applause. Collier in his "Short View" included it among those plays which he condemned; but Cibber's subsequent works would have escaped that censure. Dr. Blair, who in somewhat exaggerated style considered "The Provoked Husband" the best comedy in the English language, also added that it was calculated to expose licentiousness and folly, and would do honour to any stage. Cibber's adaptation of Molière's "Tartuffe," called the "The Nonjuror," was immensely successful and even now is occasionally acted under another name. But we have no space to even mention Cibber's numerous comédies. His autobiography, of course, deals with the details of his authorship as well as his management of Drury Lane, and of the lawsuit with Steele. This suit showed Cibber to be a man of varied talent—he pleaded his own cause with so much skill, such force of logic, that he won his case without help from the lawyers.

Cibber's domestic life contrasted unfavourably with his public career. Gentle and gracious of character in many respects, he

yet lacked steadfastness and constancy; he was shallow; had brilliancy but not depth; was amiable without being strong. It is said that he was an inattentive husband, and that he was lacking in love for his children. But it is impossible to determine how true this is, so much has been said of him which is the direct outgrowth of personal envy. Cibber had a large family, but only two of his children grew up. The son led an infamous life and made his wife—the famous actress—very unhappy. Cibber's daughter had a career highly romantic and full of varied adventures. She died in extreme poverty. As a proof of how impossible it is to judge correctly of Cibber's domestic relations, one authority asserts that this daughter died two or three years after her father's death; another that she died in destitution while he was yet alive! One thing is, however, certain, that Cibber repeatedly urged upon his children the charms and duty of virtue, but that his appeals and his warnings were alike in vain.

In Cibber's early days a sight of Charles II. had inspired a poem, and he also wrote an ode on James II. But these efforts showed no trace of the sparkle of his subsequent comedies. George I. had been delighted with "The Nonjuror." When Eusden died the queen promised the laurel to Richard Savage, but George II. and his Lord Chamberlain willed otherwise. For twenty-seven years Cibber wrote odes with great patience and industry. In these the vitalising power, the imaginative spirit of true poetry is wholly lacking; and yet they are not contemptible. They are correct in form, and have some eloquence and terseness of phrase and melody of versification. Of course, Cibber was not fitted for the position of laureate, and he should have had the good sense to decline, but being one of the vainest of men he accepted, and so he incurred the ridicule of all the satirists of the day. But he never lost his temper. He would often read to his friends the best things written against his unlucky odes, and would reply in epigrams satirising himself with much wit and spirit.

The persistent malice of Pope has become a part of history. Pope's "Dunciad" is immortal, and so Cibber's name will always suffer. It is surprising how well Cibber bore Pope's attacks, only once or twice did he even notice them, and then he said that Pope considered a lick at the laureate a sure bait to catch little readers. When Cibber wrote his famous letter of remonstrance to Pope, he showed dignity as well as unanswerable logic, but Pope was unappeasable. All critics, from Johnson to De Quincey, concur in the belief in Pope's inaccuracy. De Quincey even spoke of his radical insincerity of character, of his indifference to truth whenever it stood in the way of pungent satire or any literary effect. Disraeli wrote: "Pope

forced a dunce to appear as Cibber, but this was not making Cibber a dunce." But after all the just things are said of Cibber which can be said, the fact remains that

"Truth of history goes to wrock under the perversities of Satire."

Bentley said to one who threatened to write him down, that no author was ever written down but by himself. But Bentley was wrong. The world at large judges Cibber more by the "Dunciad" than by his own Autobiography. Cibber's book, however, still retains its charm for its naïveté, its childlike egotism, its many accurate pictures of famous men and women and great events; and as a history of the stage in one of its most interesting epochs it is an important contribution to literature. When Cibber heard that Swift had sat up all night to read his book, he shed tears of joy. Betterton's prophecy, early in Cibber's career, that he would make an actor of decided power, had also brought tears to the eyes of this volatile, mercurial nature, who, in spite of grave defects of character, showed many wise and sagacious traits—traits in marked and favourable contrast to the famous poet who maligned him.

Soon after being appointed laureate Cibber retired from the stage, acting only occasionally with his favourite, Peg Woffington. His last days were quiet and peaceful, and he died quite suddenly at the advanced age of eighty-six.

SELECTIONS FROM CIBBER.

AN ODE TO HIS MAJESTY FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1730-31.

ONCE more the ever circling sun
Through the celestial signs has run;
Again old Time inverts his glass,
And bids the annual seasons pass.
The youthful Spring shall call for birth,
And glad with opening flowers the earth;
Fair Summer load with sheaves the field,
And golden fruits shall Autumn yield:
Each, to the Winter's want, their stores shall bring
Till warmer genial suns recall the Spring.

Ye grateful Britons, bless the year
That kindly yields increase,
While plenty that might feed a war,
Enjoys the guard of peace.

Your plenty to the skies you owe;
Peace is your Monarch's care,
Thus bounteous Jove, and George below
Divided empire share!

Turn, happy Britons, to the throne your eyes,
And in the royal offspring see
How amply bounteous Providence supplies
The source of your felicity.

Behold in every face,
Imperial graces shine!
All native to the race
Of George and Caroline.

CIBBER'S IRONICAL LINES ON HIMSELF.

(*In reply to the assertion of his enemies that he had written praises of his own genius.*)

AH! bah! Sir Coll, is that thy way,
Thine own dull praise to write?
And wouldn't thou stand so sure a lay?
No, that's too stale a bite.

Nature and Art in thee combine,
Thy talents here excel,
All shining Brass thou dost outshine
To play the cheat so well.

Who sees thee in Iago's part,
But thinks thee such a rogue?
And is not glad with all his heart,
To hang so sad a dog?

When Bayes thou playest, Thyself thou art;
For that by Nature fit,
No blockhead better suits the part,
Than such a Coxcomb wit.

In Wronghead too, thy Brains we see,
Who might do well at Plough;
As fit for Parliament was he,
As for the Laurel, Thou!

Bring thy protected verse from Court,
And try it on the Stage;
Here it will make much better sport
And set the town in rage.

There Beaux and Wits and Cits and Smarts,
Where Hissing's not uncivil,
Will show their hearts to thy deserts
And send them to the Devil.

But ah! in vain, 'gainst Thee we write,
In vain thy verse we maul,
Our sharpest Satyr's thy Delight,
For Blood! thou'lt stand it all.

Thunder, 'tis said the Laurel spares;
Nought but Thy brows could blast it;
And yet, O curst, provoking Stars!
Thy comfort is, thou hast it.



'WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS OF THE LIGHT? O TELL YOUR POOR BLIND BOY!"—*Page* 101.

THE BLIND BOY.

O SAY what is that thing call'd Light,
Which I must ne'er enjoy;
What are the blessings of the Light,
O tell your poor blind boy!

You talk of wondrous things you see,
You say the sun shines bright;
I feel him warm, but how can he
Or make it day or night?

My day or night myself I make
Whene'er I sleep or play;
And could I ever keep awake
With me 'twere always day.

With heavy sighs I often hear
You mourn my hapless woe;
But sure with patience I can bear
A loss I ne'er can know.

Then let not what I cannot have
My cheer of mind destroy,
Whilst this I sing, I am a king
Although a poor blind boy.

FROM SHE WOU'D AND SHE WOU'D NOT.

This business will never hold water.

FROM WOMAN'S WIT.

Possession is eleven points in the law.

Words are but empty thanks.

FROM LOVE'S LAST SHIFT.

As good be out of the world as out of the fashion.

We shall find no fiend in hell can match the fury of a disappointed woman—scorned! slighted! dismissed without a parting pang.

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FROM THE RIVAL FOOLS.

Stolen sweets are best.

FROM CÆSAR IN EGYPT.

Is there a crime
Beneath the roof of heaven, that stains the soul
Of man with more infernal hue than damn'd
Assassination?

How sudden are the blows of fate! what change,
What revolution, in the state of glory!

Oh! had he ever lov'd, he would have thought
The worst of torture bliss, to silent parting.

Virtue never is defac'd! unchanged
By strokes of fate, she triumphs o'er distress,
And every bleeding wound adorns her beauty.

FROM RICHARD III.

LIFE'S but a short chase, our game—content.
Which most pursued, is most compelled to fly
And he that mounts him on the swiftest hope,
Shall soonest run his courser to a stand;
While the poor peasant from some distant hill,
Undanger'd and at ease, views all the sport,
And sees content take shelter in his cottage.

. . . . . .

Why now my golden dream is out—
Ambition, like an early friend, throws back
My curtains with an eager hand, o'erjoyed
To tell me what I dreamt is true—a crown,
Thou bright reward of ever-daring minds;
Oh! how thy awful glory fills my soul!
Nor can the means that got thee dim thy lustre;
For, not men's love, fear pays thee adoration,
And fame not more survives from good than evil deeds.
Th' aspiring youth that fir'd th' Ephesian dome,
Outlives in fame the pious fool that rais'd it.

. . . . . .

Off with his head! So much for Buckingham.

. . . . . .

I've lately had two spiders
Crawling upon my startled hopes—
Now tho' thy friendly hand has brush'd 'em from me,
Yet still they crawl offensive to my eyes;
I would have some kind friend tread upon 'em.

. . . . . .

Hark, from the tents
The armourers accomplishing the knights,
With chink of hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.

. . . . . .

Richard is himself again.

FROM KING JOHN.

Is death more cruel from a private dagger
Than in the field, from murdering swords of thousands?
Or does the number slain make slaughter glorious?

. . . . . .

Were men t' appear themselves,
Set free from customs that restrain our nature,
Nor wolves nor tigers would dispute more fiercely!
Yet all we boast above the brute is—what?
That in our times of need we dare dissemble.

FROM KING JOHN.

Act V.

Falconbridge. O Reverend Father, haste, the dying King
Implores thy holy aid.—
Abbot. Said'st thou the King?
Falconbridge. Dying he seems, or cannot long survive:
Whether by heat of action in the field,
His latent fever is inflam'd to danger,
Or, as suspicion strongly has avouched,
The gloomy Monk, who serv'd him with the cup,
Might impiously infuse some bane of life,
We know not, but his interval of sense
In grones calls earnest for his Confessor.
Constance. In his accounted sins be this remembered.
[*Pointing to the corpse of Arthur.*

Falconbridge. If Grief or Prejudice could bear to hear me,
I could a truth unfold would calm thy sorrows.
Constance. Lies not my child there murdered?—
Falconbridge. Hear my story.

Enter Salisbury *with* Arundel.

Salisbury. How fortunate the hour! that he had sense
To ratify our rights and seal the charter.
Abbot. What news, my Lords? How fares the King?
Salisbury. I fear me, poison'd! his whole mass of blood
Is touch'd corruptibly, and his frail brain,
Which some suppose the mansion of the soul,
By the disjointed comments that it makes,
Foreshows its mortal office is expiring.
Falconbridge. And Hubert dying disavowed the deed.
[*Apart to Constance.*
Constance. Admitting this, that mere mischance destroyed him,
What but his wrongs expos'd him to mischance?
Nor therefore are my sorrows more reliev'd,
But as oppression may be less than murder.

Enter Pembroke.

Pembroke. The King seems more at ease and holds belief,
That were he brought into the open air,
It might assuage the ferment that consumes him.
Salisbury. Behold the sad remains of royalty!
Falconbridge. Let those who lov'd him not endure the sight,
When *he* is gone my hopes in life are friendless. [*Exit.*

King John *is brought in.*

Abbot. How fares your majesty?
King John. The air's too hot,
It steams, it scalds! I cannot bear this furnace!
Stand off, and let the Northern wind have way,
Blow, blow! ye freezing blasts from Iceland skies
O blissful region, that I there were king!
To range and roll me in eternal snow,
Where crowns of icicles might cool my brain,
And comfort me with cold.——
Abbot. O gracious Heaven—
Relieve his senses from these mortal pangs,
That his reflecting soul may yet look back
On his offences past with penitence!
King John. Why am I tortur'd thus? I kill'd him not;

Was it so criminal to wish him dead?
If wishes were effectual, oh, my crown,
My crown should from the grave with joy redeem him!
Abbot. If penitence, not frenzy prompts thy tongue!
Behold this object of calamity,
Whom thy severities have sunk with sorrow.
O, carry not beyond the grave your enmity.
King John. Constance, the mournful relict of my brother,—
How do thy wrongs sit heavy on my soul;
But who was ever just in his ambition!
Thou seest me now an object of thy triumph,
The vital cordage of my heart burnt up!
All to a single thread on which it hangs
Consumed; now may the fearless lamb approach,
Now close the lion eye of enmity.
Hence but a moment all this royalty,
This pride of power will crumble into ashes.
Abbot. In his extremities, Heaven help the King!
Constance. And may his contrite soul receive its mercy.
King John. The lamp of life is dry—Thy prayers, O Father!
At Worcester let these mortal bones have rest.
My eyes refuse the light—the stroke is given.
O, I am call'd—I wander—mercy, Heaven! [*Dies.*
Constance. He is gone.
The turbulent oppressor is no more.
The hour of heav'nly justice has at last
Demanded his account of England's Empire;
But since he seem'd to pass in penitence,
Let all his crimes be buried in his grave.
Thou Power ador'd, what thanks shall I repay thee,
That my affections have subdu'd my soul,
T' extend its charity even to my enemies?
Now Life, I have no farther use for thee;
Defer awhile the obsequies of Arthur,
Pass but some hours and I shall soon o'ertake him,
Then lay us in one peaceful grave together.—
[*Exit, led off.*

Enter Falconbridge, *who, seeing the King, starts back.*

Falconbridge. My fears are true, good news comes now too late;
Deaf is the ear which best might give it hearing.
Salisbury. O Falconbridge! if thou hast aught that may dispel our general consummation, speak it.
Falconbridge. Something I bring to cheer this sudden sadness;

From France the Lady Blanch, arriv'd, has wrought
Her comfort Dauphin to such peaceful temper,
That hearing you the Barons had disclaim'd him,
He now accepts the Legate's mediation,
And, on such terms as honour may accord,
He and his forces leave our land in peace.
Salisbury. Lose not a moment then to close this treaty;
Build we a bridge of gold for his retreat!
And may the recent dangers we have passed.
Never by civil discord be recall'd.
Falconbridge. There only lives the error can mislead us.
Let not self-wounds our native strength impair,
What rash invader can have hope to shake us?
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
England no foreign force shall e'er subdue
While Prince and Subjects to themselves are true.



WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.

WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.

Born at Cambridge in 1715. Made Laureate in 1757. Died in 1785.
(Reigns of George II. and George III.)

ON the death of Cibber the laurel was offered to Thomas Gray. But Gray seemed to have no ambition to be the successor of men like Tate and Eusden. For Dryden's genius Gray always had that earnest admiration which made him attribute to its influence his own poetic power. And yet of Dryden's character Gray sternly stood censor. "He was," said Gray, "as disgraceful to the office of the Laureateship from his character, as the poorest scribbler could have been from his verses. The office itself has humbled the possessor hitherto,—if he were a poor writer, by making him more conspicuous; and, if he were a good one, by setting him at war with the little fry of his own profession,—for there are poets little enough even to envy a Poet Laureate."

So even the opportunity to be a successor to the great Dryden had no charm for this rare spirit of genius. Even when urged to accept, and promised that no birthday odes would be required from him unless he chose to write them, Gray remained firm. But he wrote to his friend Mason, that he would like to know to whom the laurel would be given, as he interested himself not a little in its history.

Whitehead had never put forth his own claims, but his unsought honours were due to the influence of the Earl of Jersey, who urged Pitt to appoint him laureate.

The liberty of choice offered to Gray was not extended to Whitehead. He had to furnish the customary odes every year, as Shadwell, Tate, and others had done before him. Mason remarked that he should think King George would have wished to dispense with hearing music for which he had no ear and poetry for which he had no taste. But Campbell said he need not have thought so. "If the King had a taste for poetry he would have abolished the laureate odes altogether; as he had not, they were continued."

Whitehead was of humble origin, the son of a baker of Cambridge, who gave his son a good education amid numerous difficulties and embarrassments. The boy very early showed a taste for poetry, had even written a comedy when his com-

panions were thinking only of field sports. At Winchester school, when a prize was offered for a poem on a subject chosen by Alexander Pope, it was Whitehead who, to his own delight and the surprise of his good father, was fortunate in winning the prize.

The boy showed his good sense by not being ashamed to win an education at the expense of his pride. Entering Cambridge as a sizar, he graduated with honours and was elected a fellow of his college. He then became tutor to the son of the Earl of Jersey. He travelled with him, and then settled down with him in his quiet, beautiful home, where many happy years were passed. Whitehead had leisure for literary studies, and he enjoyed not only the friendship and confidence of his employers, but formed many close connections with the nobility, who treated him with respect and deference. Whitehead became very popular among his friends, winning their regard, and keeping it, too. His manners were not only polished, but were the outward expression of a sincere and kind heart. Though fond of society, he indulged in no dissipation. He visited the theatres frequently, and this finally led him to try his hand at dramatic writing, and his success was greater than he had himself anticipated.

"Creusa" is perhaps the best of Whitehead's plays. It is founded upon the story told long ago by Euripides in "Ion," but in the hands of Whitehead it is divested of all supernatural machinery, and deals with many ideas current in his own age.

Whitehead was a far better dramatist than poet. Garrick praised him and liked to act his characters, and Mrs. Cibber thought some of them her best rôles. The people applauded the sprightly, elegant dialogue, which even if it did not show the genius of men like Congreve or Southerne, was pure and dignified, upheld virtue and honour, and made intrigue and insincerity of life contemptible.

The temper of the age was, as we know, not poetical. Literature appealed to the intellect, and ministered little to the spiritual instincts of humanity. The thought which strove to express itself in poetical form had no strength of flight, few touches of imaginative or vitalising power, little glow and fire of spontaneous passion. In 1756 William Whitehead gave to the world a volume of poems which were perfectly in harmony with the whole spirit of his age. Their versification was graceful, obviously modelled upon that of Pope. Their thoughts were conventional, and the poet's treatment of his themes showed little originality, though many times his style had a sparkle really captivating, and his skill in narrative was both interesting and dramatic. Occasionally Whitehead became eloquent with earnestness and a semblance of passion.

Two years before being appointed laureate Whitehead became Secretary and Registrar of the Order of the Bath. To the patronage of his constant friends, the Jerseys, this appointment was due, not to his own political services. The same might be said of his winning the laurel. The gift was not due to his services to literature, though he himself had the obtuseness to think it was, and wrote so repeatedly in his answers to his critics.

The satirical assaults he suffered from the wits of the day had the unfortunate effect of making his comedies less popular. After he became laureate, Garrick even went so far as to accept one of Whitehead's plays only on the condition that the author's name be withheld. The laureate replied to his lampooners in his "Charge to the Poets," which Coleridge praised so highly. The forced humour of this poem, as well as its dogmatism and conceit, provoked a storm of abuse. Then came "The Pathetic Apology for All Laureats," another poem which would naturally excite still more ridicule. The infamous Churchill spoke of Whitehead as being in the laureate's chair, "by grace, not merit planted there," and of his "mongrel kind of tinkling prose." Even Dr. Johnson spoke slightingly of Whitehead's talents, but the cause was not so much the doctor's critical sagacity as his enmity to Garrick, for Whitehead had shown his good sense in upholding Garrick when he had revived Ben Jonson's two great plays. The prologue he wrote to "Every Man in his Humour" is as good as anything he ever did. Horace Walpole, even when he praised Whitehead's "Variety" for its humour and originality, and called it a pretty poem, could not help adding that it possessed not more poetry than is necessary for a laureate. I should class "The Enthusiast" even higher than "Variety." It is a poem written in thorough sympathy with the peace and charm of nature, and also points to that wider sympathy with humanity which is so characteristic of the true dramatist.

A writer in *Blackwood* wrote thus of Whitehead's laureate odes, and coming as it does from an English source it is especially interesting to Americans: "What now appears most noticeable in Whitehead's odes is his prolonged and ludicrous perplexity about the American War. At the first outbreak of it, he is the indignant and scornful patriot, confident in the power of the mother country, and threatening the rebels with condign punishment. As they grow more and more obstinate, he becomes the pathetic remonstrant with these unnatural children, and coaxes them to be good boys. When any news of success to the British arms has arrived, he mounts his high horse again and gives the Yankees hard words, hints that the gates of mercy are not quite closed to repentance. Reverses

come, and he consoles the King. Matters grow worse, and he is at his wit's end. At last the struggle is over; he accommodates himself to the unpleasant necessity of the case, and sings the blessings of peace and concord."

Laureate from 1757 to 1785, Whitehead died very suddenly at the age of seventy, only a few days before the King's birthday. Though George the Third's ignorance of both poetry and music would have excited the contempt of Mason, the king did not wish his birthday to pass without the customary tribute to his many and sterling virtues. It is said that Thomas Warton was appointed to the vacant Laureateship even before the funeral of Whitehead, and was forced to write an ode in great haste.

SELECTIONS FROM WHITEHEAD.

THE LAUREATE.

OBLIGED by sack and pension,
Without a subject or invention,
Must certain words in order set,
As innocent as a gazette—
Must some meaning half disguise,
And utter neither truth nor lies.

FROM A CHARGE TO THE POETS.

THE following fact is true
From nobler names and great in each degree,
The pension'd laurel has devolved on me,
To me, ye bards; and what you'll scarce conceive,
Or, at the best, unwillingly believe,
Howe'er unworthily I wear the crown,
Unask'd it came, and from a hand unknown.

ODE FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1761.

AND who is he of regal mien,
  Reclined on Albion's golden fleece,
Whose polished brow and eye serene
  Proclaim him elder born of Peace?
Another George! ye winds convey
  Th' auspicious name from pole to pole!
Thames catch the sound, and tell the subject sea
  Beneath whose sway its waters roll.
The hoary monarch of the deep,
  Who soothed its murmurs with a father's care,
Doth now eternal Sabbath keep,
  And leaves his trident to his blooming Heir.
O, if the muse aright divine,
  Fair Peace shall bless his opening reign,

And through its splendid progress shine,
With every art to grace her train,
The wreaths so late by glory won,
Shall weave their foliage round his throne,
Till kings abashed shall tremble to be foes,
And Albion's dreaded strength secure the world's repose.

ODE FOR HIS MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY, JUNE 4, 1765.

HAIL to the rosy morn, whose ray
To lustre wakes the auspicious day,
Which Britain holds so dear!
To this fair month of right belong
The festive dance, the choral song,
And pastimes of the year.
Whate'er the wintry colds prepar'd,
Whate'er the spring but faintly rear'd,
Now wears its brightest bloom;
A brighter blue enrobes the skies,
From laughing fields the zephyrs rise
On wings that breathe perfume.
The lark in air that warbling floats,
The wood-birds with their tuneful throa
The streams that murmur as they flow,
The flocks that rove the mountain's brow,
The herds that through the meadows play,
Proclaim 'tis nature's holiday!

And shall the British Lyre be mute,
Nor thrill through all its trembling strings,
With oaten reed, and pastoral flute,
Whilst every vale responsive rings?
To him we pour the grateful lay
Who makes the season doubly gay:
For whom, so late, our lifted eyes,
With tears besought the pitying skies,
And won the cherub Health to crown
A nation's prayer, and ease that breast
Which feels all sorrows but its own
And seeks by blessing to be blest.
Fled are all the ghastly train,
Writhing pain, and pale disease;
Joy resumes his wonted reign,
The sunbeams mingle with the breeze,
And his own month, which Health's gay livery wears,
On the sweet prospect smiles of long succeeding years.

THE JE NE SCAI QUOI.

A SONG.

YES, I'm in love, I feel it now,
And Cælia has undone me;
And yet I'll swear I can't tell how
The pleasing plague stole on me.

'Tis not her face which love creates,
For there no graces revel;
'Tis not her shape, for there the Fates
Have rather been uncivil.

'Tis not her air, for sure in that
There's nothing more than common;
And all her sense is only chat,
Like any other woman.

Her voice, her touch, might give th' alarm
'Twas both perhaps, or neither;
In short, 'twas that provoking charm
Of Cælia all together.

THE DOUBLE CONQUEST.

A SONG.

OF music, and of beauty's power,
I doubted much and doubted long:
The fairest face a gaudy flower,
An empty sound the sweetest song.

But when her voice Clarinda rais'd,
And sung so sweet and smil'd so gay,
At once I listen'd, and I gaz'd;
And heard, and look'd my soul away.

To her, of all his beauteous train,
This wondrous power had Love assign'd,
A double conquest to obtain,
And cure at once the deaf and blind.

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF A YOUNG LADY FOUR YEARS OLD.

OLD creeping Time, with silent tread,
Has stol'n four years o'er Molly's head.
The rose-bud opens on her cheek,
The meaning eyes begin to speak;
And in each smiling look is seen
The innocence which plays within.
Nor is the falt'ring tongue confin'd
To lisp the dawnings of the mind,
But fair and full her words convey
The little all they have to say;
And each fond parent, as they fall,
Find volumes in that little all.
May every charm which now appears
Increase, and brighten with her years!
And may that same old creeping Time
Go on till she has reach'd her prime,
Then, like a master of his trade,
Stand still, nor hurt the work he made.

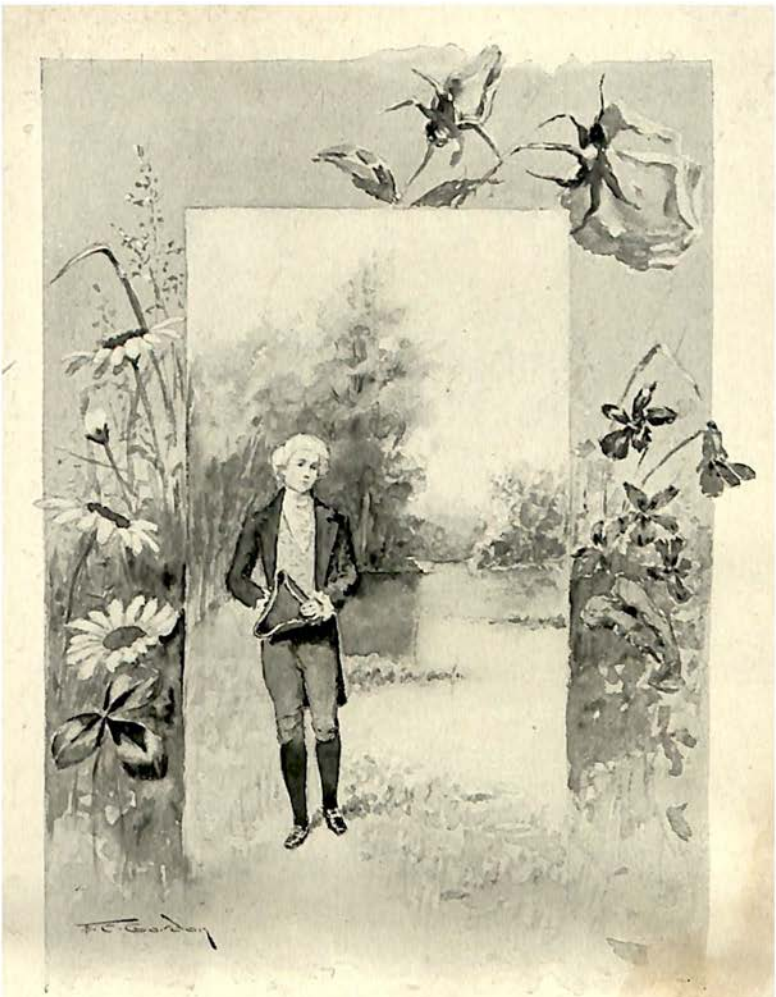
THE ENTHUSIAST.

AN ODE.

ONCE, I remember well the day,
'Twas ere the blooming sweets of May
Had lost their freshest hues,
When every flower and every hill,
In every vale had drunk its fill
Of sunshine and of dews.

In short, 'twas that sweet season's prime,
When Spring gives up the reins of time
To Summer's glowing hand,
And doubting mortals hardly know
By whose command the breezes blow
Which fan the smiling land.

'Twas there, beside a greenwood shade,
Which clothed a lawn's aspiring head,
I urged my devious way,
With loitering steps regardless where,
So soft, so genial was the air,
So wondrous bright the day.



"'TWAS THAT SWEET SEASON'S PRIME
WHEN SPRING GIVES UP THE REINS OF TIME
TO SUMMER'S GLOWING HAND."—*Page* 114.

And now my eyes with transport rove
O'er all the blue expanse above,
Unbroken by a cloud!
And now beneath delighted pass,
Where winding through the deep green grass,
A full-brimmed river flowed.

I stop, I gaze, in accents rude,
To thee, serenest solitude,
Burst forth th' unbidden lay:
"Begone, vile world! The learned, the wise,
The great, the busy, I despise,
And pity even the gay.

"These, these are joys alone," I cry;
"'Tis here, divine Philosophy,
Thou deign'st to fix thy throne!
Here contemplation points the road
Through nature's charms to nature's God!
These, these are joys alone!

"Adieu, ye vain, low-thoughted cares,
Ye human hopes and human fears,
Ye pleasures and ye pains!"
While thus I spake, over my soul
A philosophic calmness stole,
A stoic stillness reigns.

The tyrant passions all subdue,
Fear, anger, pity, shame, and pride,
No more my bosom move;
Yet still I felt, or seemed to feel,
A kind of visionary zeal
Of universal love.

When lo! a voice, a voice I hear.
'Twas Reason whispered in my ear
These monitory strains:
"What mean'st thou, man? Would'st thou unbind
The ties which constitute thy kind,
The pleasures and the pains?

"The same Almighty Power unseen,
Who spreads the gay or solemn scene
To contemplation's eye,
Fixed every movement of the soul,
Taught every wish its destined goal,
And quickened every joy.

"He bids the tyrant passions rage,
He bids them war external wage,
And combat each his foe;
Till from dissensions concords rise,
And beauties from deformities,
And happiness from woe.

"Art thou not man, and dar'st thou find
A bliss which leans not to mankind?
Presumptuous thought and vain!
Each bliss unshared is unenjoyed,
Each power is weak unless employed
Some social good to gain.

"Shall light and shade, and warmth and air
With those exalted joys compare
Which active virtue feels,
When on she drags, as lawful prize,
Contempt and indolence and vice,
At her triumphant wheels?

"As rest to labour still succeeds
To man, whilst virtue's glorious deeds
Employ his toilsome day,
This fair variety of things
Are merely life's refreshing springs
To soothe him on his way.

"Enthusiast, go, unstring thy lyre,
In vain thou sing'st if none admire,
How sweet soe'er the strain;
And is not thy o'erflowing mind,
Unless thou mixest with thy kind,
Benevolent in vain?

"Enthusiast, go, try every sense;
If not thy bliss, thy excellence,
Thou yet hast learned to scan;
At least thy wants, thy weakness know,
And see them all uniting show
That man was made for man."

LINES TO GARRICK.

A NATION'S taste depends on you;
Perhaps a nation's virtue, too.
O think how glorious 'twere to raise
A theatre to virtue's praise,

Where no indignant blush might rise,
Nor wit be taught to plead for vice.
But every young, attentive ear
Imbibe the precepts living there;
And every inexperienced breast
There feels its own rude hints exprest,
And, wakened by the glowing scene,
Unfold the world that lurks within.

ON ONE OF HIS LAMPOONERS.

CHURCHILL had strength of thought, had power to paint,
Nor felt from principle the least restraint.
From hell itself his characters he drew,
And christen'd them by every name he knew;
For 'twas from hearsay he picked up his tales,
Where false and true by accident prevails.
Hence, I, though older far, have lived to see
Churchill forgot, *an empty shade like me.*
That I'm his foe, e'en Churchill can't pretend;
But, thank my stars, he proves I am no friend.

Yet, Churchill, could an honest wish succeed,
I'd prove myself to thee a friend indeed;
For, had I power like that which bends the spheres
To music never heard by mortal ears,
Where in his system sets the central sun
And drags reluctant planets into tune.
So would I bridle thy eccentric soul,
In reason's sober orbit bid it roll;
Spite of thyself would make thy rancour cease,
Preserve thy present fame and future peace,
And teach thy muse no vulgar place to find
In the full moral chorus of mankind.

SELECTIONS FROM THE ROMAN FATHER

THIS is true courage, not the brutal force
Of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve
Of virtue and of reason. He who thinks
Without their aid to shine in deeds of arms,
Builds on a sandy basis his renown,
A dream, a vapour, or an ague fit
May make a coward of him.

My soul,
Like yours, is open to the charms of praise.
There is no joy beyond it, when the mind
Of him who hears it can, with honest pride,
Confess it just, and listen to its music.

SELECTIONS FROM LINES TO THE HONOURABLE CHARLES TOWNSEND.

O CHARLES, in absence hear a friend complain,
Who knows thou lov'st him wheresoe'er he goes,
Yet feels uneasy starts of idle pain,
And often would be told the thing he knows.
Why then, thou loiterer, fleets the silent years,
How dar'st thou give a friend unnecessary tears?

O I remember, and with pride repeat,
The rapid progress which our friendship knew
Even at the first with willing minds we met;
And ere the root was fix'd, the branches grew.
In vain had Fortune plac'd her weak barrier;
Clear was thy breast from pride, and mine from servile fear.

TO LADY NUNEHAM, ON THE DEATH OF HER SISTER, THE HONOURABLE CATHARINE VENABLES VERNON, JUNE, MDCCLXXV.

MILD as the opening morn's serenest ray,
Mild as the close of summer's softest day,
Her form, her virtues (fram'd alike to please
With artless grace and unassuming ease),
On every breast their mingling influence stole,
And in sweet union breath'd one beauteous whole.
Oft, o'er a sister's much-lamented bier,
Has genuine anguish pour'd the kindred tear:
Oft, on a dear-lov'd friend's untimely grave,
Have sunk in speechless grief, the wise and brave.
—Ah, hapless thou! for whose severer woe
Death arm'd with double force his fatal blow,
Condemn'd (just Heaven! for what mysterious end?)
To lose at once the sister and the friend!

VARIETY.

(*A Tale for Married People.*)

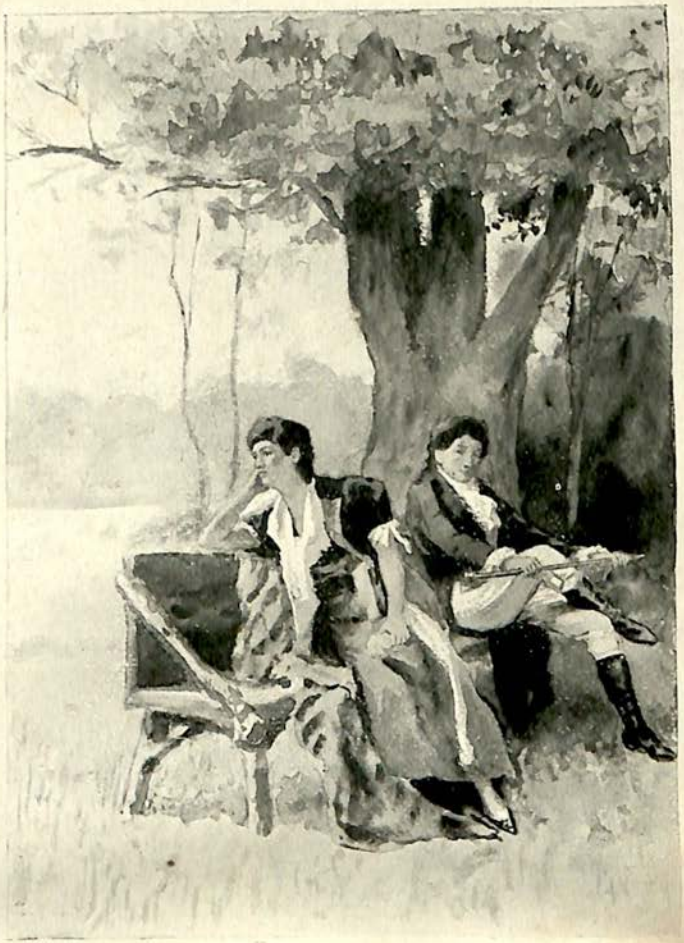
TWO smiling springs had waked the flowers
That paint the meads, or fringe the bowers—
Ye lovers, lend your wondering ears,
Who count by months, and not by years—
Two smiling springs had chaplets wove
To crown their solitude and love:
When lo! they find, they can't tell how
Their walks are not so pleasant now.
The seasons sure were changed; the place
Had, somehow, got a different face,
Some blast had struck the cheerful scene;
The lawns, the woods were not so green.
The purling rill, which murmured by,
And once was liquid harmony,
Became a sluggish, reedy pool;
The days grew hot, the evenings cool.
The moon, with all the starry reign,
Were melancholy's silent train.
And then the tedious winter-night—
They could not read by candle-light.
Full oft, unknowing what they did,
They called in adventitious aid.
A faithful favourite dog—'twas thus
With Tobit and Telemachus—
Amused their steps; and for a while
They viewed his gambols with a smile.
The kitten, too, was comical,
She played so oddly with her tail,
Or in the glass was pleased to find
Another cat, and peeped behind.
A courteous neighbour at the door,
Was deemed intrusive noise no more.

. . . . .

Yet neighbours were not quite the thing—
What joy, alas! could converse bring
With awkward creatures bred at home—
The dog grew dull, or troublesome,
The cat had spoiled the kitten's merit,
And, with her youth, had lost her spirit.
And jokes repeated o'er and o'er,
Had quite exhausted Jenny's store.

—"And then, my dear, I can't abide
This always sauntering side by side."
"Enough," he cries; "the reason's plain,
For causes never rack your brain.
Our neighbours are like other folks;
Skip's playful tricks, and Jenny's jokes,
Are still delightful, still would please
Were we, my dear, ourselves at ease.
Look round, with an impartial eye,
On yonder fields, on yonder sky;
The azure cope, the flowers below,
With all their wonted colours glow;
The rill still murmurs; and the moon
Shines, as she did, a softer sun.
No change has made the seasons fail,
No comet brushed us with his tail,
The scenes the same, the same the weather—
We live, my dear, too much together."

Agreed. A rich old uncle dies,
An added wealth the means supplies.
With eager haste to town they flew,
Where all must please, for all was new.
Why should we paint in tedious song,
How every day, and all day long,
They drove at first with curious haste
Through Lud's vast town; or, as they passed
'Midst risings, fallings, and repairs
Of streets on streets, and squares on squares,
Describe how strong their wonder grew
At buildings—and at builders too?
Advanced to fashion's waving head,
They now, where once they followed, led;
Devised new systems of delight,
Abed all day, and up all night,
In different circles reigned supreme;
Wives copied her, and husbands him;
Till so divinely life ran on,
So separate, so quite bon-ton
That, meeting in a public place,
They scarcely knew each other's face.
At last they met, by his desire,
A tête-à-tête across the fire;
Looked in each other's face a while,
With half a tear and half a smile.
The ruddy health, which wont to grace
With manly glow his rural face



"WE LIVE, MY DEAR, TOO MUCH TOGETHER."—*Page* 120.

Now scarce retained its faintest streak,
So sallow was his leathern cheek.
She lank and pale, and hollow-eyed,
With rouge had striven in vain to hide
What once was beauty, and repair
The rapine of the midnight air.
Silence is eloquence, 'tis said.
Both wished to speak, both hung the head.
At length it burst: "'Tis time," he cries,
"When tired of folly, to be wise.
Are you, too, tired?"—then checked a groan.
She wept consent, and he went on:
"How delicate the married life!
You love your husband, I my wife;
Not even satiety could tame,
Nor dissipation quench the flame.
True to the bias of our kind,
'Tis happiness we wish to find.
In rural scenes retired we sought
In vain the dear, delicious draught,
Though blest with love's indulgent store,
We found we wanted something more.

. . . . . .

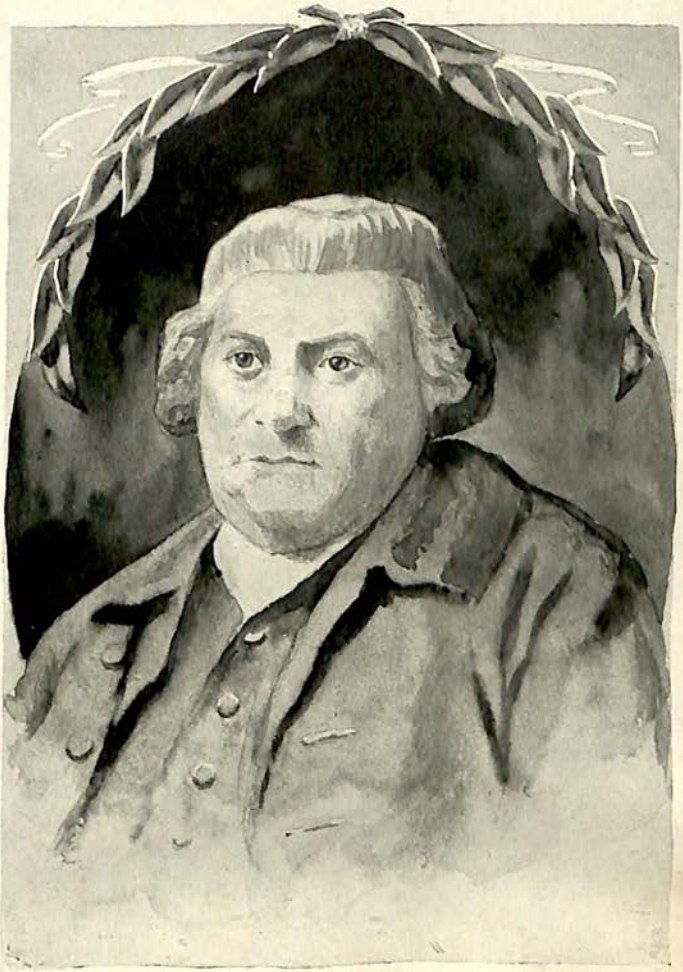
"We left the lonesome place, and found,
In dissipation's giddy round,
A thousand novelties to wake
The springs of life, and not to break.
As, from the nest not wandering far,
In light excursions through the air,
The feathered tenants of the grove
Around in mazy circles move,
Sip the cool springs that murmuring flow,
Or taste the blossoms on the bough;
We sported freely with the rest,
And still, returning to the nest,
In easy mirth we chatted o'er
The trifles of the day before.
Behold us now, dissolving quite
In the full ocean of delight;

. . . . . .

Not happy yet! and where's the wonder?
We live, my dear, too much asunder!"

The moral of my tale is this:
Variety's the soul of bliss;

But such variety alone
As makes our home the more our own.
As from the heart's impelling power
The life-blood pours its genial store;
Though taking each a various way,
The active streams meandering play
Through every artery, every vein,
All to the heart return again;
From thence resume their new career,
But still return and centre there,
So real happiness below
Must from the heart sincerely flow;
Nor, listening to the siren's song,
Must stray too far or rest too long.
All human pleasures thither tend;
Must there begin, and there must end;
Must there recruit their languid force,
And gain fresh vigour from their source.



THOMAS WARTON.

THOMAS WARTON.

Born at Basingstoke, Hampshire, in 1728. Made laureate in 1785. Died in 1790.

(Reign of George III.)

NOT since Dryden's time had the laurel been bestowed so worthily as now. At last a man of genius and a true poet had been willing to accept the honour. Warton was undoubtedly the best poet of the prevailing school, though he had also shown traces of being in harmony with that reaction which was already manifesting itself, soon to be expressed in the work of Cowper and Burns, and later of Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth. Warton was, as it were, a bridge between the poets of Queen Anne's time and the poets who were to work out the great revolution in English poetry. Warton not only showed traces of that enthusiasm for nature which was soon to be expressed so gloriously, he not only viewed with sympathy the spiritual phases of the age as contrasted with its predominant critical and artificial temper, but he wrote in harmony with that romantic and historical impulse which gave birth to a sublime passion for the glories of the past. It has long been the opinion that Percy's "Reliques" and Warton's "History" turned "the course of our literature into a fresh channel." In Warton's case his passion for the past resulted in the production of poetry infinitely fresher, nobler, truer than any since the time of Milton, and by influence he was the "veritable literary father of Sir Walter Scott." In many respects Warton was imitative. Often we see in his work the influence of Gray as well as of older writers, but it was an unconscious imitation which has its charm. And it is far better to imitate noble models and show some power, than to produce the tame, conventional, correct verses of men who followed so closely the lead of Dryden and Pope.

Warton's powers as a descriptive poet were notable, not so much where he treated natural scenery, but historic places. He showed a delight in Gothic architecture, in the grand ruins of his country, in all that was in harmony with his historical and critical tendencies. It is said that his poem on Oxford in which come the lines beginning :

"Ye fretted pinnacles, ye fanes sublime,"

so affected Dr. Johnson that when he first heard it read, he applauded till his hands pained him. The poem for its eloquence and vigour has many admirers still.

As a politician Warton was acceptable to the government. He was an ardent Conservative in all his opinions, and in religion somewhat of a bigot. The bestowal of the laurel pleased him greatly, and he alluded to it in one of his sonnets with a naïveté which is charming. Like Southey, Warton wished to magnify his office, and in his verse classed Chaucer and Spenser among the laureates of the past, but when driven to state plain facts, he, too, acknowledged that the true English Laureateship began with Ben Jonson.

Of all the laureates, with the exception of Rowe, Warton suffered the least from satirical attacks. His unmistakable claim to greatness seemed to impress the small buzzing gnats that usually swarmed about the poets of the day. Warton's first official ode was composed in haste and was not at all equal to the poetry he had been writing for many years, and it excited more or less ridicule; but after that, his official work was done with such genuine power that even the famous Wolcot, who under the name of Peter Pindar, produced such biting, brilliant, and unmerciful satires, contented himself with a few harmless thrusts. Warton was too great a poet and too amiable a man to treat such attacks with anything but composure and dignity. To his official odes we can apply the words which he himself applied to Dryden:

> "He came to light the muse's clearer flame,
> To lofty numbers grace to lend,
> And strength with melody to blend;
> To triumph in the bold career of song,
> And roll th' unwearied energy along."

We notice in Warton's official work not only lyric grace and manly strength, but an absence of that servility, that insincerity of adulation, which had disgraced the work of Tate and Eusden. He expressly said that he spurned Dryden's panegyric strings, that servile fear that had disgraced his regal bays—that it was his wish, however, to catch Dryden's manlier chord.

Every family influence seemed to stimulate Warton's natural bent towards poetry. His father, the vicar of Basingstoke in Hants, and professor of poetry at Oxford, had distinguished himself for his verses. His elder brother, Joseph, was famous as a poet, a translator, an editor, and a critic. But his duties as head master of Winchester prevented him from giving his time to these congenial pursuits, and from carrying out many of his poetical theories—theories opposed to the dominant school of Pope.

Thomas early showed great powers of application and a de-

votion to poetry in harmony with family traditions. At the age of nine he translated an epigram of Martial, and thus began to lay the foundation for his subsequent profound and far-reaching scholarship. At sixteen he entered Trinity College, Oxford; and in the following year he wrote "The Pleasures of Melancholy." He took his degree with honour, and was elected a fellow in 1751. Subsequently became professor of poetry, and then of ancient history. Like his brother, Warton entered the Church and held different livings, but his clerical duties were merely nominal. He lived most of his life at Oxford, and he never married. Old Oxford honoured him all through his busy, useful career; and when the end came, he was buried in Trinity College Chapel with every mark of respect and all "academical pomp."

The quiet days at Oxford were spent in editing various editions of the classics, and in compiling anthologies; in writing some sonnets which rank as among the best in our literature; and in publishing poems,—some of them humorous and satirical,—and these were a relief from the statelier efforts of his genius. The critical sagacity of the man showed itself in his "Observations on the Poetry of Spenser;" and he did great service to Milton's fame by his able and sympathetic editing of the minor poems. But Warton spent most of his time in investigating our early literature; and it resulted in his great work, "The History of English Poetry." Of the value of this work no student can be forgetful. He was a pioneer in a new field, and as such his labours were prodigious, but he won an enviable success. His influence upon English literature has indeed been great, "greater than at the first glance we should imagine," say Austin and Ralph, "not from any peculiar force of mind stamping its impress on his own age and giving a direction to the thinking of posterity, but from his opportune appearance, and the accidental bent of his studies. Himself a traveller in unaccustomed regions of research, he pointed out the way to that wide field of romantic literature which had become almost a shadowy land to his contemporaries." And William Minto says with equal justice and enthusiasm that though specialists may here and there detect errors in Warton's work, it is always interesting, while its breadth and exactness of scholarship must always command wonder and respect. He became, as I said before, the veritable literary father of Sir Walter Scott, and it was through him, in fact, that the mediæval spirit which always lingered in Oxford first began to stir after its long inaction, and to claim an influence in the modern world.

Warton was not only a profound scholar and a poet, but he was an entertaining companion; "the life of the common room," is the Oxford tradition. He told stories well, with a charm of

wit most irresistible. Though never married, he was passionately fond of children; and this natural love found outlet in frequent visits to Winchester School, and with all the boys he was a great favourite. He often helped them with their tasks. Once discovering that on a poor fellow the composition of a poem on a difficult subject had been imposed, he wrote the poem for him. But it was so exceedingly well done that the innocent fraud was of course detected immediately. Joseph Warton, however, with a mischievous glance at his brother's imperturbable face, allowed the matter to pass with the remark that he should expect another poem of equal merit the following week.

Warton's portrait as painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds shows an earnest, grave face, with a sparkle to the eyes, the mouth inclined to curve into a smile. Handsome in youth, he grew stout as the years passed. He had some eccentricities, and was not wholly free from certain harmless superstitions; but he was at all times the jovial, free-hearted English gentleman. His literary eminence, joined to his brilliant wit and his charm in conversation, won him many friends among men of letters, and he was the recipient of many flattering honours from them.

Laureate only five years, he was engaged in writing an ode when a stroke of paralysis came swift and sure to end his busy, useful life. Three days after death had claimed him, this last ode was performed in the Royal Chapel amid the tears of all present.



"THE PRINCE IN SABLE STEEL."—*Page* 127.

SELECTIONS FROM WARTON.

ON HIS MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY, JUNE 4, 1787.

THE noblest bards of Albion's choir
Have struck of old this festal lyre.
Ere science, struggling oft in vain,
Had dar'd to break her Gothic chain,
Victorious Edward gave the vernal bough
Of Britain's bay to bloom on Chaucer's brow:
Fir'd with the gift, he chang'd to sounds sublime,
His Norman minstrelsy's discordant chime;
In tones majestic hence he told
The banquet of Cambuscan bold;
And oft he sung (howe'er the rhyme
Has moulder'd to the touch of time)
His martial master's Knightly board,
And Arthur's ancient rites restor'd:
The prince in sable steel that sternly frown'd,
And Gallia's captive king, and Cressy's wreath renown'd.

Won from the shepherd's simple meed,
The whisper's wild of Mulla's reed,
Sage Spenser wak'd his lofty lay
To grace Eliza's golden sway:
O'er the proud theme new lustre to diffuse,
He chose the gorgeous allegoric muse,
And call'd to life old Uther's elfin tale,
And rov'd through many a necromantic vale,
Portraying chiefs that knew to tame
The goblin's ire, the dragon's flame,
To pierce the dark enchanted hall,
Where virtue sate in lonely thrall.
From fabling Fancy's inmost store
A rich romantic robe he bore:
A veil with visionary trappings hung,
And o'er his virgin-queen the fairy texture flung.

At length the matchless Dryden came,
To light the muses' clearer flame;
To lofty numbers grace to lend,
And strength with melody to blend;
To triumph in the bold career of song,
And roll th' unwearied energy along,
Does the mean incense of promiscuous praise,
Does servile fear disgrace his regal bays?
I spurn his panegyric strings,
His partial homage, tun'd to Kings!
Be mine, to catch his manlier chord,
That paints the impassion'd Persian lord,
By glory fir'd, to pity su'd,
Rous'd to revenge, by love subdu'd.
And still with transport new, the strains to trace
That chant the Theban pair, and Tancred's deadly vase.

Had these blest bards been call'd to pay
The vows of this auspicious day,
Each had confess'd a fairer throne,
A mightier sovereign than his own!
Chaucer had bade his hero-monarch yield
The martial fame of Cressy's well-fought field
To peaceful prowess, and the conquests calm,
That braid the sceptre with the patriot's palm.
His chaplets of fantastic bloom,
His colourings, warm from fiction's loom,
Spenser had cast in scorn away,
And deck'd with truth alone the lay:
All real here the bard had seen
The glories of his pictur'd queen!
The tuneful Dryden had not flatter'd here,
His lyre had flameless been, his tribute all sincere.

SELECTION FROM ODE ON HIS MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY, JUNE 4, 1788.

WHAT native genius taught the Britons bold
To guard their sea-girt cliffs of old?
'Twas Liberty; she taught disdain
Of death, of Rome's imperial chain.
She bade the Druid harp to battle sound.
In tones prophetic, through the gloom profound
Of forest hoar, with holy foliage hung;
From grove to grove the pealing prelude rung;
Belinus call'd his painted tribes around

And, rough with many a veteran scar,
Swept the pale legions with the scythed car,
While baffled Cæsar fled, to gain
An easier triumph on Pharsalia's plain;
And left the stubborn isle, to stand elate
Amidst a conquer'd world, in lone majestic state.

SELECTIONS FROM THE PLEASURES OF MELANCHOLY.

MOTHER of Musings, contemplation sage,
Whose grotto stands upon the topmost rock
Of Teneriff; 'mid the tempestuous night,
On which, in calmest meditation held,
Thou hear'st with howling winds the beating rain,
And drifting hail descend; or if the skies
Unclouded shine, and through the blue serene
Pale Cynthia rolls her silver-axled car,
Whence gazing steadfast on the spangled vault
Raptur'd thou sitt'st, while murmurs indistinct
Of distant billows soothe thy pensive ear
With hoarse and hollow sounds; secure, self-blest.
There oft thou listen'st to the wild uproar
Of fleets encount'ring, that in whispers low
Ascends the rocky summit, where thou dwell'st
Remote from man, conversing with the spheres!
O lead me, queen sublime, to solemn glooms
Congenial with my soul; to cheerless shades,
To ruin's seats, to twilight cells and bow'rs,
Where thoughtful Melancholy loves to muse,
Her fav'rite midnight haunts. The laughing scenes
Of purple spring, where all the wanton train
Of smiles and graces seem to lead the dance
In sportive round, while from their hands they show'r
Ambrosial blooms and flow'rs, no longer charm;
Tempe, no more I court thy balmy breeze,
Adieu, green vales! ye broider'd meads, adieu!

. . . . . .

Beneath yon ruin'd Abbey's moss-grown piles
Oft let me sit at twilight hour of eve,
Where through some western window the pale moon
Pours her long-levell'd rule of streaming light;
While sullen sacred silence reigns around,
Save the lone screech-owl's note, who builds his bow'r
Amid the moul'dring caverns dark and damp,

On the calm breeze, that rustles in the leaves
Of flaunting ivy, that with mantle green
Invests some wasted tow'r. Or let me tread
Its neighbouring walks of pines, where mus'd of old
The cloister'd brothers: through the gloomy void
That far extends beneath their ample arch
As on I pace, religious horror wraps
My soul in dread repose. But when the world
Is clad in midnight's raven-colour'd robe,
'Mid hollow charnel let me watch the flame
Of taper dim, shedding a livid glare
O'er the wan heaps; while airy voices talk
Along the glimm'ring walls; or ghostly shape
At distance seen, invites with beck'ing hand
My lonesome steps, through the far winding vaults.
Nor undelightful is the solemn noon
Of night, when haply wakeful from my couch
I start: lo, all is motionless around!
Roars not the rushing wind; the sons of men
And every beast in mute oblivion lie;
All nature's hush'd in silence and in sleep.
O then how fearful is it to reflect
That through the still globe's awful solitude,
No being wakes but me! till stealing sleep
My drooping temples bathes in opiate dews.
Nor then let dreams of wanton folly born,
My senses lead through flow'ry paths of joy;
But let the sacred genius of the night
Such mystic visions send, as Spenser saw
When through bewild'ring fancy's magic maze,
To the fell house of Busyrane, he led
Th' unshaken Britomart; or Milton knew
When in abstracted thought he first conceived
All heav'n in tumult, and the seraphim
Come tow'ring, arm'd in adamant and gold.
Let others love soft summer's ev'ning smiles,
As list'ning to the distant water-fall,
They mark the blushes of the streaky west;
I choose the pale December's foggy glooms.
Then with the sullen shades of ev'ning close,
Where through the room a blindly-glimm'ring gleam
The dying embers scatter, far remote
From mirth's mad shouts, that through the illumin'd roof
Resound with festive echo, let me sit,
Blest with the lowly crickets drowsy dirge.
Then let my thought contemplative explore
This fleeting state of things, the vain delights,



"LET OTHERS LOVE SOFT SUMMER'S EV'NING SMILES,
AS LIST'NING TO THE DISTANT WATER-FALL,
THEY MARK THE BLUSHES OF THE STREAKY WEST:"

—*Page* 130.

The fruitless toils, that still our search elude,
As through the wilderness of life we rove.
This sober hour of silence will unmask
False folly's smile, that like the dazzling spells
Of wily Comus cheat th' unweeting eye
With blear illusion, and persuade to drink
That charmed cup, which reason's mintage fair
Unmoulds, and stamps the monster on the man.
Eager we taste, but in the luscious draught
Forget the poisonous dregs that lurk beneath.

OXFORD.

(*From "The Triumph of Isis." Written in 1749.*)

YE fretted pinnacles, ye fanes sublime,
Ye towers that wear the mossy vest of time!
Ye massy piles of old munificence,
At once the pride of learning and defence;
Ye cloisters pale, that lengthening to the sight,
To contemplation, step by step, invite;
Ye high-arch'd walks, where oft the whispers clear
Of harps unseen have swept the poet's ear;
Ye temples dim, where pious Duty pays
Her holy hymns of ever-echoing praise;
Lo! your lov'd Isis, from the bordering vale,
With all a mother's fondness bids you hail!—
Hail, Oxford, hail! of all that's good and great;
Of all that's fair, the guardian and the seat;
Nurse of each brave pursuit, each generous aim,
By truth exalted to the throne of fame!
Like Greece in science and in liberty,
As Athens learn'd, as Lacedemon free!
Ev'n now, confess'd to my adoring eyes,
In awful ranks thy gifted sons arise.
Tuning to nightly tale his British reeds,
Thy genuine bards immortal Chaucer leads:
His hoary head o'erlooks the gazing choir,
And beams on all around celestial fire.
With graceful step see Addison advance,
The sweetest child of Attic elegance:
See Chillingworth the depths of doubt explore,
And Selden ope the rolls of ancient lore:
To all but his belov'd embrace deny'd,
See Locke lead Reason, his majestic bride:

See Hammond pierce religion's golden mine,
And spread the treasur'd stores of truth divine.
All who to Albion gave the arts of peace
And best the labours plann'd of letter'd ease:
Who taught with truth, or with persuasion mov'd;
Who sooth'd with numbers, or with sense improv'd;
Who rang'd the powers of reasons, or refin'd,
All that adorn'd or humanised the mind;
Each priest of health, that mixed the balmy bowl,
To rear frail man, and stay the fleeting soul;
All crowd around, and echoing to the sky
Hail, Oxford, hail! with filial transport cry.
And see yon sapient train! with liberal aim,
'Twas theirs new plans of liberty to frame;
And on the Gothic gloom of slavish sway
To shed the dawn of intellectual day.
With mild debate each musing feature glows,
And well weigh'd counsels mark their meaning brows.
"Lo! these the leaders of thy patriot line,"
A Raleigh, Hamden, and a Somers shine.
These from thy source the bold contagion caught,
Their future sons the great example taught:
While in each youth th' hereditary flame
Still blazes, unextinguish'd, and the same!
Nor all the tasks of thoughtful peace engage,
'Tis thine to form the hero as the sage.
I see the sable-suited prince advance
With lilies crown'd, the spoils of bleeding France,
Edward. The muses in yon cloister'd shade,
Bound on his maiden thigh the martial blade:
Bade him the steel for British freedom draw,
And Oxford taught the deeds that Cressy saw.
And see, great father of the sacred band,
The patriot King before me seems to stand,
He by the bloom of this gay vale beguil'd
That cheer'd with lively green the shaggy wild,
Hither of yore, forlorn, forgotten maid,
The muse in prattling infancy convey'd;
From vandal rage the helpless virgin bore,
And fixed her cradle on my friendly shore:
Soon grew the maid beneath his fostering hand,
Soon stream'd her blessings o'er the enlighten'd land.
Though simple was the dome, where first to dwell
She deign'd, and rude her early Saxon cell,
Lo! now she holds her state in sculptur'd bowers,
And proudly lifts to heaven her hundred towers.
'Twas Alfred first with letters and with laws,



"FOR THEM THE MOON WITH CLOUDLESS RAY
MOUNTS, TO ILLUME THEIR HOMEWARD WAY."—*Page* 133.

Adorn'd, as he advanc'd, his country's cause:
He bade relent the Briton's stubborn soul,
And sooth'd to soft society's control
A rough untutor'd age.

SELECTIONS FROM THE HAMLET.

THE hinds how blest, who ne'er beguiled
To quit their hamlet's hawthorn wild,
Nor haunt the crowd, nor tempt the main,
For splendid care, and guilty gain.

When morning's twilight-tinctured beam
Strikes their low thatch with slanting gleam,
They rove abroad in ether blue,
To dip the scythe in fragrant dew;
The sheaf to bind, the beech to fell,
That nodding shades a craggy dell.

Midst gloomy glades, in warbles clear,
Wild nature's sweetest notes they hear,
On green untrodden banks they view
The hyacinth's neglected hue;
In their lone haunts, and woodland rounds,
They spy the squirrel's airy bounds;
And startle from her ashen spray,
Across the glen the screaming jay,
Each native charm their steps explore
Of solitude's sequester'd store.
No riot mars the simple fare
That o'er a glimmering hearth they share.

For them the moon with cloudless ray
Mounts, to illume their homeward way:
Their weary spirits to relieve,
The meadows incense breathe at eve.

Their humble porch with honey'd flowers
The curling woodbine's shade embowers;
From the small garden's thymy mound
Their bees in busy swarms resound;
Nor fell Disease, before his time,
Hastes to consume life's golden prime,
But when their temples long have wore
The silver crown of tresses hoar,
As studious still calm peace to keep,
Beneath a flowery turf they sleep.

RETIREMENT.

(*Inscription in a Hermitage.*)

BENEATH this stony roof reclined,
I soothe to peace my pensive mind;
And while, to shade my lowly cave,
Embowering elms their umbrage wave,
And while the maple dish is mine,—
The beechen cup, unstained with wine,—
I scorn the gay licentious crowd,
Nor heed the toys that deck the proud.

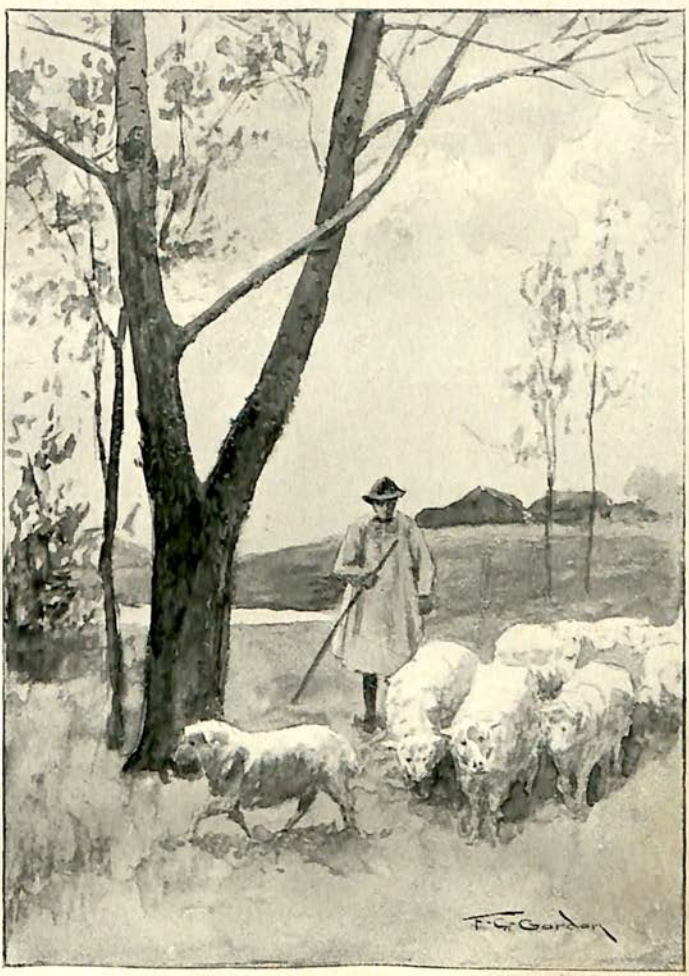
At morn I take my customed round,
To mark how buds yon shrubby mound,
And every opening primrose count,
That trimly paints my blooming mount;
Or o'er the sculptures, quaint and rude
That grace my gloomy solitude,
I teach in winding wreaths to stray
Fantastic ivy's gadding spray.

At eve, within yon studious nook,
I ope my brass-embossed book,
Portrayed with many a holy deed
Of martyrs, crowned with heavenly meed;
Then, as my taper waxes dim,
Chant, ere I sleep, my measured hymn,
And, at the close, the gleams behold
Of parting wings, bedropt with gold.

While such pure joys my bliss create,
Who but would smile at guilty state?
Who but would wish his holy lot
In calm oblivion's humble grot?
Who but would cast his pomp away,
To take my staff, and amice gray,
And to the world's tumultuous stage
Prefer the blameless hermitage?

TO SLEEP.

ON this my pensive pillow, gentle Sleep!
Descend in all thy downy plumage drest;
Wipe with thy wing these eyes that wake to weep,
And place thy crown of poppies on my breast.



"RELUCTANT COMES THE TIMID SPRING."—*Page* 135.

O steep my senses in oblivion's balm,
And soothe my throbbing pulse with lenient hand;
This tempest of my boiling blood becalm!
Despair grows mild at thy supreme command.

FROM EURIPIDES.

MUSIC! why thy power employ
Only for the sons of joy?
Only for the smiling guests
At natal or at nuptial feasts?
Rather thy lenient numbers pour
On those whom secret griefs devour;
And with some softly whisper'd air
Smooth the brow of dumb despair.

SELECTION FROM THE FIRST OF APRIL.

WITH dalliance rude young Zephyr woos
Coy May. Full oft with kind excuse
The boisterous boy the fair denies,
Or with a scornful smile complies.
Mindful of disaster past,
And shrinking at the northern blast,
The sleety storm returning still,
The morning hoar, and evening chill;
Reluctant comes the timid Spring.

. . . . .

The fresh turn'd soil with tender blades,
Thinly the sprouting barley shades;
Fringing the forest's devious edge,
Half rob'd appears the hawthorn hedge;
Or to the distant eye displays
Weakly green its budding sprays.

The swallow, for a moment seen,
Skims in haste the village green;
From the gray moor, on feeble wing,
The screaming plovers idly spring;
The butterfly, gay-painted soon,
Explores awhile the tepid noon;
And fondly trusts its tender dyes
To fickle suns, and flattering skies.

Fraught with a transient, frozen shower,
If a cloud should haply lower,
Sailing o'er the landscape dark,
Mute on a sudden is the lark;
But when gleams the sun again
O'er the pearl-besprinkled plain,
And from behind his watery veil
Looks through the thin descending hail;
She mounts, and, lessening to the sight,
Salutes the blithe return of light,
And high her tuneful track pursues
Mid the dim rainbow's scatter'd hues.

Where in venerable rows
Widely waving oaks enclose
The moat of yonder antique hall,
Swarm the rooks with clamorous call:
And to the toils of nature true,
Wreath their capacious nests anew.

SLEEP.

COME, gentle Sleep! attend thy votary's prayer,
And though Death's image, to my couch repair;
How sweet, though lifeless, yet with life to lie,
And without dying, oh, how sweet to die!

MONODY.

WRITTEN NEAR STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

AVON, thy rural views, thy pastures wild,
The willows that o'erhang thy twilight edge,
Their boughs entangling with th' embattled sedge;
Thy brink with watery foliage quaintly fring'd,
Thy surface with reflected verdure ting'd;
Soothe me with many a pensive pleasure mild.
But while I muse, that here the bard divine
Whose sacred dust yon high-arch'd aisles enclose,
Where the tall windows rise in stately rows
Above th' embowering shade.
Here first, at fancy's fairy-circled shrine,
Of daisies pied his infant offering made;
Here playful yet, in stripling years unripe,
Fram'd of thy reeds a shrill and artless pipe;

Sudden thy beauties, Avon, all are fled,
As at the waving of some magic wand;
An holy trance my charmed spirit wings,
And awful shapes of warriors and of kings
People thy busy mead,
Like spectres swarming to the wizard's hall;
And slowly pace, and point with trembling hand
The wounds ill-covered by the purple pall.
Before me Pity seems to stand
A weeping mourner, smote with anguish sore,
To see Misfortune rend in frantic mood
His robe, with regal woes embroider'd o'er.
Pale Terror leads the visionary band,
And sternly shakes his sceptre, dropping blood.

SELECTIONS FROM THE SONNETS.

I.

ON REVISITING THE RIVER LODON.

AH! what a weary race my feet have run
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crowned,
And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
Beneath the azure sky and golden sun,
When first my Muse to lisp her notes begun!
While pensive Memory traces back the round
Which fills the varied interval between;
Much pleasure, more of sorrow marks the scene.
Sweet native stream! those skies and sun so pure,
No more return to cheer my evening road!
Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flowed,
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature;
Nor with the muse's laurel unbestowed.

II.

WRITTEN AT WINSLADE, HAMPSHIRE.

WINSLADE, thy beech-capt hills, with waving grain
Mantled, thy chequer'd views of wood and lawn,
Whilom could charm, or when the gradual dawn
Gan the gray mist with orient purple stain,
Or evening glimmer'd o'er the folded train;

Her fairest landscapes whence my muse has drawn,
Too free with servile courtly phrase to fawn,
Too weak to try the buikin's stately strain;
Yet now no more thy slopes of beech and corn,
Nor views invite, since he far distant strays,
With whom I trac'd their sweets at eve and morn,
From Albion far, to cull Hesperian bays;
In this alone they please, howe'er forlorn,
That still they can recall those happier days.

III.

WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF DUGDALE'S MONASTICON.

DEEM not devoid of elegance the sage,
By fancy's genuine feelings unbeguiled,
Of painful pedantry, the poring child,
Who turns of these proud domes the historic page,
Now sunk by time, and Henry's fiercer rage.
Think'st thou the warbling muses never smiled
On his lone hours? Ingenious views engage
His thoughts, on themes unclassic falsely styled,
Intent. While cloistered piety displays
Her mouldering roll, the piercing eye explores
New manners, and the pomp of elder days,
Whence culls the pensive bard his pictured stores.
Not rough nor barren are the winding ways
Of hoar antiquity, but strewn with flowers.

IV.

WRITTEN AT STONEHENGE.

THOU noblest monument of Albion's isle!
Whether by Merlin's aid from Scythia's shore,
To Amber's fatal plain Pendragon bore,
Huge frame of giant-hands, the mighty pile,
T' entomb his Britains slain by Hengist's guile;
Or Druid priests, sprinkled with human gore,
Taught mid thy massy maze their mystic lore;
Or Danish chiefs, enrich'd with savage spoil,
To victory's idol vast, and unhewn shrine,
Rear'd the rude heap; or, in thy hallow'd round,
Repose the Kings of Brutus' genuine line;
Or here those kings in solemn state were crown'd:
Studious to trace thy wondrous origine,
We muse on many an ancient tale renown'd.

V.

WRITTEN AFTER SEEING WILTON HOUSE.

FROM Pembroke's princely dome, where mimic art
Decks with a magic hand the dazzling bow'rs,
Its living hues where the warm pencil pours,
And breathing forms from the rude marble start,
How to life's humbler scene can I depart?
My breast all glowing from those gorgeous tow'rs,
In my low cell how cheat the sullen hours!
Vain the complaint: for fancy can impart
(To fate superior, and to fortune's doom)
Whate'er adorns the stately-storied hall,
She, 'mid the dungeon's solitary gloom,
Can dress the graces in their Attic pall,
Bid the green landskip's vernal beauty bloom;
And in bright trophies clothe the twilight wall.

VI.

ON SUMMER.

While summer suns o'er the gay prospect played,
Through Surrey's verdant scenes, where Epsom spreads
'Mid intermingling elms her flowery meads,
And Hascombe's hills, in towering groves array'd,
Rear'd its romantic steep, with mind serene
I journey'd blithe. Full pensive I return'd;
For now my breast with hopeless passion burn'd,
Wet with hoar mists appear'd the gaudy scene
Which late in careless indolence I pass'd;
And autumn all around those hues had cast
Where past delight my recent grief might trace.
Sad change, that Nature a congenial gloom
Should wear, when most my cheerless mood to chase,
I wished her green attire and wonted bloom!

HENRY JAMES PYE.

Born in London in 1745. Made laureate in 1790. Died in 1813.

(Reign of George III.)

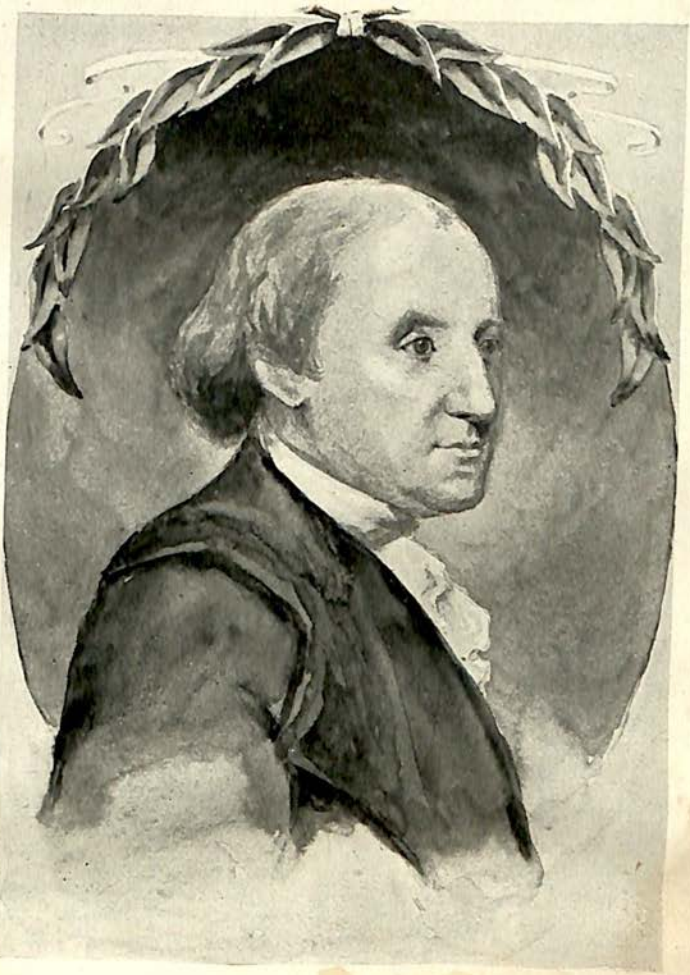
WHEN Warton died, there were many suggestions from the critics that the Laureateship be abolished. Edward Gibbon said: "This is the best time for not filling up the office, when the prince is a man of virtue, and the poet just departed was a man of genius."

Byron said that Henry James Pye was a man eminently respectable in everything but his poetry; and his critics and lampooners fret themselves over the puzzle why he was made poet laureate. The *Chronique Scandaleuse*, seeking for a solution, finds it in the fact that once Pye and George III. were hunting together. The king tumbled and lost his wig. Pye hastened to raise his sovereign from his undignified position, but His Majesty, with ill-concealed anxiety, began to search in the bog for his wig. "Never mind your royal wig," said Pye impulsively; "I care more for the safety of your sacred Majesty's person. I sincerely trust your Majesty is unhurt." This solicitude impressed the king to such an extent that when Warton died, and a list of candidates for the Laureateship being presented to the king, he straightway recommended Pye.

Henry James Pye was an aristocrat, belonged to an ancient family which had come over to England with the Conqueror, and had afterwards been connected with royalty. One of his ancestors was Auditor of the Exchequer in the reign of James I. It was therefore Sir Robert Pye's duty to pay Ben Jonson his annual grant, and it was to him that Jonson addressed his famous epistle when the salary was in arrears. Sir Robert Pye's son married the daughter of John Hampden.

It is not with his ancestors, however, but with the laureate himself that we must concern ourselves. His childhood was a happy one. Taught by a private tutor at home, he was studious and precocious, read Homer at ten years of age, and delighted in mental gymnastics such as in these days are unknown to our children.

At seventeen he entered Magdalen College, Oxford, and at twenty-one he left the university on account of the death of his father. The estate was a large one, and he felt his responsi-



HENRY JAMES PYE.

bility greatly. The father's debts amounted to over fifty thousand pounds, but as these were not chargeable to the estate one might suppose Pye would have quietly taken possession of his inheritance and left the debts alone. But his honourable nature prompted him to do far otherwise. He assumed the whole burden of these debts. Other misfortunes came swiftly on the heels of this one; and Pye was at last forced to sell his paternal estate. Some biographers have said that the estate was sold to meet the heavy expenses of Pye's own election to the House, but this is not so. The whole action of the poet tends to raise him in the estimation of all who can appreciate devotion to duty. Respectable in everything but his poetry, we must be sure to remember that!

"I would rather be thought a good Englishman than the best poet or the greatest scholar that ever wrote," Pye once said.

He had his wish. He was a man of culture and a scholar of distinction, but the world does not consider him a great poet: noble, sincere, a man of high principle—an Englishman in the truest and the highest sense he must be considered.

It is well to emphasise this fact about Pye's financial affairs, as even the writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* articles attributed Pye's appointment as laureate to his having spent a fortune in electioneering for the ministers of state. But he never had the pleasure of feeling he had a fortune to spend. It had gone into a bottomless abyss. He learned from his father's errors and misfortunes many a lesson which helped him in his own life. By economy and thought he lived upon a small amount, and he even maintained his household in comfort, sometimes in elegance.

A country magistrate, then elected à member for Berks, his political services commanded respect. Then he afterwards became Police Magistrate of London. He divided his time between his books, his parlimentary and judicial duties, and the outdoor sports in which he took keen delight. His domestic life was pure and happy, his wife a beautiful woman who was devoted to him. His grace of manner, his real charm of character, won him many friends, both in his native county, where he liked to spend much of his time, and in the society of London. Even the endless squibs and burlesques Pye inspired on account of his laureate odes did not really affect his reputation as an industrious and cultured man of letters. One has but to look at the list of his voluminous works to see how faithfully he laboured. His translations of Aristotle's Poetics, of Homer, of Pindar, show accurate scholarship and elegance of phrase; his translation of the "Song of Harmodius and Aristogiton," and of Bürger's "Lenore" are fine and spirited; his criticisms on Shakespeare and others show insight and acumen. Pye's most

notable book is the "Comments upon the Commentators on Shakespeare."

Garrick was at this time doing his utmost to popularise the great dramatist; the crusade begun by Nicholas Rowe in 1709 was bearing good fruit; and Pye's own work was timely and of value. Pye was devoted to the stage, and he tried his hand at writing some plays, but they are wholly forgotten. For a complete list of these we have to go to a foreign dictionary: English encyclopædias ignore this industrious, conscientious worker. Pye's most ambitious work was an epic poem on King Alfred, but even he himself did not speak highly of his effort, and he had no hope that it would live. Indeed, Pye was as modest as Eusden had been egotistical. The contrast between them in this respect is well illustrated in their portraits.

Many of Pye's minor poems show graceful fancy and have considerable melody of versification and sparkle of style; but there is no originality of thought in them, no eloquent fervour, no imaginative strength. They are rhetorical efforts merely. His laureate odes are ardent and enthusiastic, even if they do not soar very high. He shows in them an earnest patriotism; and earnestness of itself is a form of strength and power. But Pye, with all his brilliancy of mind and his perseverance and industry, had not the making of a true poet, and his work has passed into oblivion. For twenty-three years he was poet laureate, and during that time a change had come in English poetry. The reaction against the artificialism of the age of Anne had been growing more and more pronounced, and had culminated in the mighty influence of Coleridge and Wordsworth. But Henry James Pye gave up no traditions; he was conservative in his poetry as well as in his politics and his religion. He wrote in obedience to the same models that had inspired Tate, Eusden, and Cibber. But poets like them were henceforth to have no more a place in the annals of the Laureateship. The office was to receive new honour, new dignity, from its being held by poets like Southey, Wordsworth, and Tennyson.

Two or three years before his death Pye was forced to live in retirement on account of the severe attacks of gout which afflicted him. His sufferings were so great that at the last he gave up writing the odes which he had hitherto supplied with conscientious care. At Pinner in Herts an end came to his sufferings on August 13, 1813.

Two important changes in the Laureateship which took place after the death of Pye deserve notice. For many years the odes which the laureates had written on the royal birthdays or great national anniversaries, were required odes—nothing would have excused their absence except that which excuses a man playing whist from answering his partner's lead in trumps.

These odes were set to music by the court musician, and sung at the state drawing rooms. When they were sung it did not matter if the words were poor, nobody heard them. When they were published, however, it became necessary that some degree of poetic merit be found in them. When Pye let fall his pen from a dying hand, it was determined to abolish these odes—at least to make them dependent solely on the convenience or inspiration of the laureate. It is said that this change was first suggested by Robert Southey. Anyway, when the laurel was offered to Southey he was told he could write when and how he pleased, and whatever he wrote should be read aloud, not sung.

The other change consisted in commuting the tierce of wine, which had first been granted to Ben Jonson, into an annual grant of twenty-seven pounds, this amount to be added to the original salary of one hundred pounds. The modern era of the Laureateship had therefore commenced.*

* From the time that Ben Jonson, by his egotism and dogmatism, awakened the ire of his contemporaries to the era of Southey and Wordsworth there had been a steady stream of abuse and vituperation directed at the unfortunate poets who had worn the laurel wreath. The "Bon Gaultier Ballads," published when Southey died, were but one of many burlesques. These clever verses began with:

"Who would not be the laureate bold,
With his butt of sherry to keep him merry,
And nothing to do but pocket his gold?"

Competition for the vacant Laureateship takes place:

"He's dead, he's dead, the Laureate's dead! 'Twas thus the cry began,
And straightway every garret roof gave up its minstrel man;
From Grub Street, and from Houndsditch, and from Farringdon Within,
The poets all towards Whitehall poured on with eldritch din."

Among these poets is Lord Lytton, who steps forward and says:

"And oh! what head
More fit with laurel to be garlanded
Than this which, curled in many a fragrant coil,
Breathes of Castalia's streams,—"

But among the best of these hits at the poor sons of Apollo are those levelled at Robert Montgomery, who is made to say:

"I fear no rival for the vacant throne;
No mortal thunder shall eclipse my own!
Let dark Macaulay chant his Roman lays.
Let Monckton Milnes go maunder for the bays. . .
Let Wordsworth ask for help from Peter Bell,
Let Campbell carol Copenhagen's knell. . .
I care not,—"

The famous "Bon Gaultier Ballads" end with:

"They led our Wordsworth to the Queen, she crowned him with the bays,
And wished him many happy years, and many quarter days;
And if you'd have the story told by abler lips than mine
You've but to call at Rydal Mount, and taste the Laureate's wine!"

In view of the many unjust and contemptible things which have been said under the thin veil of satire, is it any wonder that Wordsworth, whose reverent and tender soul recoiled from such degradation of his calling, should have abandoned all thoughts of a journalist's career because he had, he said, "come to a fixed resolution to steer clear of personal satire and devote himself entirely to literature?"

SELECTIONS FROM PYE.

ODE FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1791.

I.

WHEN from the bosom of the mine
The magnet first to light was thrown,
Fair Commerce hailed the gift divine,
And smiling, claimed it for her own.
My bark (she said) this gem shall guide
Thro' paths of ocean yet untried,
While as my daring sons explore
Each rude inhospitable shore,
'Mid desert lands and ruthless skies,
New seats of industry shall rise,
And culture wide extend its genial reign
Free as the ambient gale, and boundless as the main.

II.

But tyranny soon learned to seize,
The art improving science taught,
The white sail courts the distant breeze
With horror and destruction fraught;
From the tall mast fell War unfurled
His banners to a new-found world;
Oppression, armed with giant pride,
And bigot Fury by her side;
Dire Desolation bathed in blood,
Pale Avarice, and her harpy brood,
To each affrighted shore in thunder spoke,
And bowed the wretched race to slavery's iron yoke.

III.

Not such the gentler views that urge
Britannia's sons to dare the surge;
Not such the gifts her Drake, her Raleigh bore
To the wild inmates of th' Atlantic shore,

Teaching each dreer wood's pathless scene
The glories of their virgin queen.
Nor such her later chiefs who try,
Impell'd by soft humanity,
The boistrous wave, the rugged coast,
The burning zone, the polar frost,-
That climes remote, and regions yet unknown,
May share a George's sway, and bless his patriot name.

IV.

Warm Fancy, kindling with delight,
Anticipates the lapse of age,
And as she throws her eagle's flight
O'er Time's yet undiscovered page,
Vast continents, now dark with shade,
She sees in verdure's robe arrayed,
Sees o'er each island's fertile steep
That frequent studs the southern deep,
His fleecy charge the shepherd lead,
The harvest wave, the vintage bleed:
See Commerce springs of guiltless wealth explore,
Where frowns the western world on Asia's neighbouring shore.

V.

But lo! across the black'ning skies,
What swarthy demon wings his flight?
At once the transient landscape flies,
The splendid vision sets in night.
And see Britannia's awful form,
With breast undaunted, brave the storm:
Awful, as when her angry tide
O'erwhelmed the wrecked Armada's pride.
Awful, as when the avenging blow
Suspending o'er a prostrate foe,
She snatched in vic'try's moment, prompt to save,
Iberia's sinking sons from Calpe's glowing wave.

VI.

Ere yet the tempest's mingled sound
Burst dreadful o'er the nations round,
What angel shape, in beaming radiance dight,
Pours through the severing clouds celestial light!
'Tis Peace—before her seraph eye
The fiends of Devastation fly.

Auspicious, round our Monarch's brow
She twines her olive's sacred bough;
This victory, she cries, is mine,
Not torn from war's terrific shrine;
Mine the pure trophies of the wise and good,
Unstained of woe, and undefil'd with blood.

SELECTION FROM THE ODE FOR THE KING'S BIRTHDAY, 1792.

HEARD ye the blast whose sullen roar
Burst dreadful from the angry skies?
Saw ye against the craggy shore
The waves in wild contention rise?

. . . . .

To welcome George's natal hour,
No vain display of empty power,
In flattery steep'd, no soothing lay
Shall strains of adulation pay;
But Commerce rolling deep and wide
To Albion's shores her swelling tide,
But Themis' olive cinctur'd head,
And white rob'd Peace by Victory led,
Shall fill thy breast with virtuous pride,
Shall give him power to truth allied;
Joys which alone a patriot King can prove,
A nation's strength his power, his pride a people's love.

SELECTION FROM THE ODE FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1797.

GENIUS of Albion, hear,
Grasp the strong shield, and shake the avenging spear.
By wreaths thy hardy sons of yore
From Gallia's crest victorious tore,
By Edward's lily-blazon'd shield;
By Agincourt's high trophy'd field;
By rash Iberia's naval pride,
Whelmed by Eliza's barks beneath the stormy tide;
Call forth the warrior race again,
Breathing to ancient mood the soul-inspiring strain.
To arms! your ensign straight display!
Now set the battle in array,

The oracle for war declares,
Success depends upon our hearts and spears.
Britons, strike home! revenge your country's wrongs;
Fight, and record yourselves in Druid songs.

BIRTHDAY ODE FOR THE YEAR 1800.

GOD of our father's rise,
And through the thund'ring skies
Thy vengeance urge;
In awful justice red,
Be thy dread arrows sped,
But guard our Monarch's head,
God save great George.

Still on our Albion smile,
Still, o'er this favoured isle,
O, spread thy wing!
To make each blessing sure,
To make our fame endure,
To make our rights secure,
God save our King!

To the loud trumpet's throat,
To the shrill clarion's note,
Now jocund sing.
From every open foe,
From every traitor's blow,
Virtue defend his brow,
God guard our King.

SELECTION FROM NAUCRATIA, OR NAVAL DOMINION.

ARM'D in the cause on Chalgrove's fatal plain,
Where sorrowing Freedom mourns her Hampden slain,
Say, shall the moralising bard presume,
From his proud hearse to tear one warlike plume,
Because a Cæsar or a Cromwell wore
An impious wreath, wet with their country's gore?

. . . . . .

Columbus' eye, in transports of amaze,
The spacious region of delight surveys,
Charming with real scenes the raptur'd view,
Fairer than all his warmest wishes drew;

Isles in fair spring's eternal livery dight,
The fair savannah's space, the mountain's height;
Forests of growth gigantic, that display'd
O'er spacious continents impervious shade;
Fields that, uncultur'd, harvests rich produce,
Spontaneous fruits that yield ambrosial juice;
And rivers that their sea-broad currents rolled
Through groves of perfume, and o'er sands of gold.

SHOOTING.

WHEN the last sun of August's fiery reign
Now bathes his radiant forehead in the main,
The panoply by sportive heroes worn
Is rang'd in order for the ensuing morn;
Forth from the summer guard of bolt and lock
Comes the thick guetre, and the fustian frock.
With curious skill, the deathful tube is made,
Clean as the firelock of the spruce parade:
Yet let no polish of the sportsman's gun
Flash like the soldier's weapon to the sun,
Or the bright steel's refulgent glare presume,
To penetrate the peaceful forest's gloom;
But let it take the brown's more sober hue,
Or the dark lustre of the enamell'd blue.
Let the close pouch the wadded tow contain,
The leaden pellets, and the nitrous grain;
And wisely cautious, with preventive care,
Be the spare flint and ready turnscrew there;
While the slung net is open to receive
Each prize the labours of the day shall give.

FROM ALFRED.

(*Book VI. Consequence of the Battle of Eddington.*)

SOON as the morn, in rosy mantle dight,
Spread o'er the dewy hills her orient light,
The victor monarch ranged his warrior train
In martial order on the embattled plain;
Ready to front again the storm of fight,
Or urge the advantage and pursue the flight;
But not the horizon's ample range could show
A trace, a vestige, of the vanquished foe.
Now from the exulting host in triumph peal'd
The shouts of conquest shake the echoing field;



"HER HEART A WARMER SENSE OF PITY FEELS."
—*Page* 149.

While to the sheltering convent's hallow'd walls
A softer voice the laurell'd hero calls,
Where, from the bloody scene of fight removed,
Trembling 'mid hope and fear for all she loved,
Elsitha prostrate on the earth implored
Blessings on Albion's arms and Albion's lord.
Sweet were the warrior's feelings when he press'd
His lovely consort to his beating breast;
Sweet too, Elsitha, thine—with conquest crown'd
To see the mighty chief in arms renown'd,
Though loud the cheering shouts of conquest rise,
And war's triumphant clangour rends the skies,
Forego the scenes of public joy awhile,
To share the bliss of love's domestic smile.
Yet such, alas! of human joy the state,
Some grief on Fortune's brightest hours must wait
Amid the victor laurel's greenest wreath,
Twines the funereal bough of pain and death.
Elsitha's eye among the conquering train
Seeks many a friend and near ally in vain.
Leofric, her brother's heir, whose ardent breast
Her influence mild and bland had oft repress'd,
Would Indignation's angry frown reprove,
Or warn him from the dangerous smiles of Love:
Leofric, who when the dawn awoke her fears,
Dried, with consoling voice, her gushing tears,
Mangled and lifeless from the combat borne,
Refutes at eve the promised hope of morn.
And, as her heart the painful image draws,
Of youthful Donald bleeding in her cause,
The royal warrior, beautiful and brave,
A timeless victim of the silent grave,
O'er her swol'n breast a softer sorrow steals,
Her heart a warmer sense of pity feels,
While tears, as pure as seraph eyes might shed,
Flow o'er his memory and embalm him dead.
Even Alfred, when his firmer looks survey
The field of fate in morning's sober ray,
Sees Victory's guerdon, though with safety fraught,
By blood of kindred heroes dearly bought.
Though myriads saved from slavery and death,
Their spirits waft to Heaven with grateful breath:
Yet chiefs of noble race and nobler worth,
Glory and grace of Albion's parent earth,
Extended pale and lifeless in his sight,
Check the tumultuous tide of full delight;
And as the hymns of praise ascend the air,

His bosom bows in penitence and prayer,
O'er the red sward Contrition's sorrows flow,
Though Freedom steel'd its edge and Justice sped the blow.
But when he views along the tented field,
With trailing banner and inverted shield,
Young Donald borne by Scotia's weeping bands,
In deeper woe the generous hero stands.
"O, early lost," with faltering voice he cried,
"In the fresh bloom of youth and glory's pride;
Dear, gallant friend! while memory here remains,
While flows the tide of life through Alfred's veins,
Ne'er shall thy virtues from this breast depart,
Ne'er Donald's worth be blotted from this heart.
Yet the stern despot of the silent tomb,
Who spreads o'er youth and age an equal doom,
Shall here no empire boast—his ruthless dart
That pierced with cruel point thy manly heart,
Snatch'd from his iron grasp by hovering Fame,
Graves in eternal characters thy name.
All who the radiance of thy morn have seen,
Shall augur what thy noon-tide ray had been
If Fate's decree had given thy rising sun
Its full career of glory to have run;
But oft are Valour's fires, that early blaze,
Quench'd in the crimson cloud their ardours raise.
Ah, wretched Gregor! how can words relate
To thy declining age thy Donald's fate?
For while of such a son the untimely doom
Drags thy gray hairs in sorrow to the tomb,
Each tale of praise that tries to soothe thy care,
But wounds thy heart and plants new horrors there.
On me, on England's cause, the curse shall fall,
On me the wretched sire shall frantic call;
Who from his arms his soul's last solace led
On distant plains to mingle with the dead.
Then, O, my valiant friends, whose ears attest
Of Donald's dying voice the sad bequest,
With yours my dearest care shall be combined
To soothe the tempests of your monarch's mind;
With you protect from War's, from Faction's rage,
The feeble remnant of his waning age.
As round our isle the azure billow roars,
From all the World dividing Britain's shores,
Within its fence be Britain's nations join'd
A world themselves, yet friends of human kind."



ROBERT SOUTHEY.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

Born in Bristol, 1774. Made Laureate in 1813. Died in 1843.

(Reigns of George III., George IV., William IV., and Victoria.)

SOUTHEY'S acknowledged power as a prose writer has obscured his fame as a poet. Then he has suffered by comparison with his greater associates, Wordsworth and Coleridge. But viewing his poetical work by itself, it will be found that it has qualities which go far to justify his own delight and confidence in it. The world is beginning not only to estimate Southey as he deserves, but to realise that it needs him and his work. The romantic revival of the present time will inevitably make his warlike and spirited epics popular, and the charm of his pure and healthful views of life will be found to be irresistible. Poets have not inappropriately been termed a waiting race. The man of genius obtains his rightful place at last, even if it takes wearisome years. For fifty years or more Southey has been as much underrated as Byron has been overrated. These two extremes of view have been a literary disease which is not easily cured. But finally character tells, and has its due effect upon the public. Without moral strength and dignity in poetical work,—the outgrowth of strength and dignity of life,—no work can be permanent, nor appeal to humanity with abiding power.

The faults of Southey's poetry are obvious enough. He was unfortunate, often, in his choice of subjects, which have little human interest. He struck a new and original vein in his epics, and they are full of picturesque beauty, have many thrilling situations, many magnificent thoughts, and strike with a tender and powerful touch many chords of the most tragic feeling; and yet they lack constructive skill, are too voluminous, and the introduction of occasional puerilities mars their symmetry. Southey's work is all unequal. Far-reaching thoughts which show imaginative grasp and true poetic passion, original and exquisite forms of versification, go side by side with commonplace ideas and a diction differing little from that of prose. Southey pleases most by his descriptive powers, his splendour of imagery, his skill in narrative; by his novel and musical versification,—treating blank verse even in a wholly original way,—and by the sympathetic tenderness and delicate humour he displays when

he deals with pastoral scenes and with the humble joys and sorrows of humble men and women.

His poetry was inevitably affected by his ardent historical spirit, and it also mirrored the aspects of his age. Indeed, many of his laureate poems were written in bondage to the conservative and narrower phases of the time. We condemn "The Vision of Judgment," and justly too, but some of Southey's leaureate work ranks very high for its grandeur and range. The best of his odes—the one written during the "Negociations for Peace in 1814," was inspired not only by his hatred of Napoleon, but by a most fervent patriotism. As an artistic work it possesses the finest qualities—fire and enthusiasm of invective and exhortation.

But Southey's claim to immortality rests not alone upon his best and most characteristic poems, but upon certain of his prose works. The "History of Brazil" lives intact and in the quotations and footnotes of others. The "Life of Wesley" is a masterpiece in English biography. Dining once with the Duchess of Kent, the poet was pleased when the Princess Victoria thanked him for the pleasure she had received from reading the "Life of Nelson." Even Byron said: "The 'Life of Nelson' is beautiful." Scattered through other biographies, like that of Cowper, for instance, are criticisms of insight and judgment—written in a style, like all of Southey's prose, eloquent and picturesque, idiomatic and clear. Then Southey's periodical writings show a mastery of his materials, a skilful adaptation of them to the "different bearings of the subject," and a freedom from that "miserable flippancy which some reviewers mistake for wit." It is well to remember that Southey, who did so much to make successful the *Quarterly Review*, protested against Gifford's unjust treatment of new writers, and objected to the tone adopted by the *Review* on matters relating to America. But he has himself been blamed for the very abuses he sought to remove. It is well, also, to remember that when Macaulay and Jeffrey said so many malicious things of Southey, they were *Edinburgh reviewers* and he belonged to the *Quarterly*.

Southey was the son of a Bristol merchant whose misfortunes embittered and discouraged him. From his mother the poet inherited his happy, buoyant temperament, and his delicate sense of humour. His childhood was passed under the guidance of a number of teachers, whose different modes of instruction, instead of spoiling him, but tended to satisfy his restless, inquisitive intellect. His holidays, passed with an eccentric aunt, were miserable except when she took him to the theatre. He had no companions, and he was restricted in every natural outlet for his boyish fun. The child was sensitive to impressions,

enthusiastic and ardent, and early showed that love for poetry which made him dwell in an ideal and glorious world. He was fortunate, he says, in finding when very young his way into the right path. Tasso and Ariosto, Chaucer and Spenser, and the Elizabethans were his joy even at eight years of age. It is not, therefore, surprising that later Southey should be famous for his learning and his wide and varied reading in many literatures.

The poet's days at Oxford were passed amid the unparalleled enthusiasm and hope born of the important events then occurring in France. The Revolution, which had such an influence upon Wordsworth, also affected him. As Wordsworth wrote:

"Joy it was then to be alive; but to be young was very Heaven."

Before Southey became a High Churchman and a Conservative, he passed through many varied and exciting phases of thought, which had a marked influence both upon his life and on his art.

To this period belongs the composition of "Wat Tyler" and "Joan of Arc," and the wild pantisocratic scheme of emigration to America. But Southey's common sense came to his rescue and he went to Lisbon instead. Here he laid the foundation of his profound knowledge of Portuguese language and literature, and his natural love for a literary life became intensified. On his return he tried to get interested in law, and then medicine, but could not. On account of his Unitarian views his conscience decided against his taking orders, and his refusal displeased his friends, who soon left left him to his own resources. Often he would walk the London streets dinnerless and cold. His sufferings, instead of hardening him, made him always beautfully tender and sympathetic for others. That in his devotion to literature he attained such success speaks well for the quality of his work. He was fortunate at first in having the friendship of an old school-fellow, who gave him a small annuity, then after a while some official appointments helped him out, but there were many times when he was almost discouraged by the odds against him. His dauntless spirit was at length rewarded by success, but it only came after years of toil, and was only retained by maintaining the same unwearied industry. To his devotion to literature he sacrificed worldly advancement as well as personal comfort, but he never sacrificed his friends. His home first opened to receive his mother, whom he tenderly cared for; a younger brother was also under his watchful care; then in turn Coleridge and his family and many others were the recipients of his delicate and gracious hospitality. In the very beginning of his career he married for love, and he kept his love for his wife

and hers for him till the last sad close. In every relationship he showed himself to be the noble, tender, and true man, the loyal friend, the unselfish benefactor. To his brave life a few words can do no justice. It must be studied in detail to feel the influence of its strength—its compelling charm.

About 1804 Southey settled down at Greta Hall, near Keswick, and henceforth his name will ever be associated with the beautiful Lake Country. Occasional visits to London varied the monotony of his life, and he met many eminent people; but as the years passed he became more and more wedded to his home and to his books. Wordsworth complained to Crabb Robinson that Southey away from his books seemed out of his element.

Southey's writings would make up a good library. Forty-five independent works, one hundred and twenty-six articles in the *Quarterly*, and fifty-two in the *Annual Review*, are given as the product of his pen; besides, there are innumerable shorter pieces and poems which he wrote. Had he written less, his work would have been much better. But Southey had to be a bread-winner by his pen, and transform his fiery, soaring Pegasus into a steady-going beast of burden.

When Henry James Pye died the laurel was offered to Walter Scott, but he declined. When Southey was proposed for the honour, the Prince Regent observed that inasmuch as he had written some good things in favour of the Spaniards, the office should be given him. Southey wrote to a friend: "You will admire the prince's reason!"

Southey's political principles were now very different from what they had been in the old Oxford days. He was now a Conservative and a High Churchman. He had changed as Wordsworth changed, because his hopes for republicanism had not been realised. He found in old, ancient customs and tradition a surer resting-place; the reaction was, however, extreme, and the pendulum swung too far the other way.

Because of his somewhat restricted and narrow views, so radically opposed to those of his ardent youth, many insults were heaped upon the quiet student of Keswick. He was called renegade, time-server, and turncoat. Copies of "Wat Tyler" were sent him—even his private life was attacked. Sometimes Southey, by his dogmatism and critical spirit, made the battle wage more hotly. When he attacked what he called the Satanic School he got the worst of the fight. As Austin and Ralph put it: "The quarrel with Byron was between the petulant spleen of Byron and the outraged moral feelings of the British public, speaking through Southey; but unfortunately Southey laid himself open to much of the sarcasm which by its liveliness and force still excites a smile."

It is always to be regretted that in his anxiety to do his whole

duty, to fulfil all the obligations of his office, Southey should have written "The Vision of Judgment." The error was also partly due to a wish to strike out a new path in a somewhat dreary field, to write something different from the tiresome odes of his predecessors, to be original at the expense of good taste. The poem was certainly enough to stir up Byron's ire. Yet Byron was charmed with Southey, when they met once at Holland House. "He is the best-looking bard I have seen for some time. To have that poet's head and shoulders I would almost have written his Sapphics. . . His appearance is epic. His talents are of the first order. . . His prose is perfect. . . In his poetry he has passages equal to anything." It is refreshing to once more read this from Byron, to remove the impression of the preface to *his* "Vision of Judgment," and the obnoxious lines in "Don Juan."

In 1820 Oxford honoured Southey with the degree of LL. D. Then Sir Robert Peel offered him a baronetcy, but it was declined. A generous pension soon after followed. He was elected to the House, but declined to serve. Many other tempting offers were made to him to emerge from his retirement and mingle in the active affairs of the world, but he resisted them all.

During these years, when so many unsought honours came to Southey, his heart was overwhelmed by many heavy sorrows. We read of his anguish when one of his daughters was ill; how he paced the garden in uncontrollable grief. From the loss of several children of whom he was "foolishly fond," he never fully recovered. The crowning sorrow of his life was the loss of his wife's reason. "I have been parted from my wife by something worse than death," he wrote to a friend. "Forty years has she been the life of my life, and I have left her this day in a lunatic asylum. God, who has visited me with this affliction, has given me strength to bear it. Mine is a strong heart. I will not say the last week has been the most trying of my life, but the heart which could bear it, can bear anything."

When Edith Southey was recovered enough to be cared for at home, it was the poet who assumed that care. "He was not one to shrink from an obligation and devolve upon his daughters or dependents a task he deemed it his especial duty to undertake."

His untiring devotion made her last days certainly less unhappy. That he married Caroline Bowles is no proof that he had forgotten "Edith the Beloved." The second Mrs. Southey had a melancholy task—that of ministering to him in his last days. The symptoms of change in him were slight at first, but gradually his own mind gave way. The record of his last days is too painful to even remember.

When the end came they buried him in the quiet churchyard at Crosthwaite, in the vale of Keswick, "within the shadow of the home he loved so well." And on his tomb is engraved Wordsworth's beautiful tribute.

As this inscription is somewhat different from that published among the other poems of Wordsworth, I give it as it was copied for me by a friend who was visiting the places forever sacred to the memory of both Southey and Wordsworth:

Ye vale and hills, whose beauty hither drew
The poet's steps and fixed him here, on you
His eyes have closed! and ye, loved books, no more
Shall Southey feed upon your precious lore,
To works that ne'er shall forfeit their renown
Adding immortal labours of his own—
Whether he traced historic truth, with zeal
For the state's guidance or the Church's weal,
Or fancy, disciplined by studious art,
Informed his pen, or wisdom of the heart,
Or judgments sanctioned in the patriot's mind
By reverence for the rights of all mankind.
Wide were his aims, yet in no human breast
Could private feelings find a holier nest.
His joys, his griefs, have vanished like a cloud
From Skiddaw's top; but he to Heaven was vowed
Through a life long and pure; and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.

There is a fine bust to Southey's memory in the Poet's Corner of the great Abbey, and seldom has England honoured a worthier or a greater man.

SELECTIONS FROM SOUTHEY.

SELECTION FROM CARMEN TRIUMPHALE.

(*For the Commencement of the Year 1814.*)

In happy hour doth he receive
The Laurel, weed of famous bards of yore,
Which Dryden and diviner Spenser wore,
In happy hour, and well may he rejoice,
Whose earliest task must be
To raise the exultant hymn for victory,
And join a nation's joy with harps and voice,
Pouring the strain of triumph on the wind,
Glory to God, his song, Deliverance for mankind!

Wake, lute and harp! my soul, take up the strain!
Glory to God! Deliverance for mankind!
Joy—for all nations, joy! But most for thee,
Who hast so nobly filled thy part assigned,
O England! O my glorious native land!
For thou in evil days didst stand
Against leagued Europe all in arms arrayed,
Single and undismayed,
Thy hope in Heaven and in thine own right hand.
Now are thy virtuous efforts overpaid;
Thy generous counsels now their guerdon find;
Glory to God! Deliverance for mankind!

SELECTIONS FROM ODE, WRITTEN DURING THE NEGOCIATIONS WITH BUONAPARTE, IN JANUARY, 1814.

Who counsels peace at this momentous hour,
Where God hath given deliverance to the oppress'd,
And to the injured power?
Who counsels peace, when vengeance like a flood
Rolls on, no longer now to be repress'd;
When innocent blood

From the four corners of the world cries out
For justice upon one accursed head;
When Freedom hath her holy banner spread
Over all nations, now in one just cause
United; when with one sublime accord
Europe throws off the yoke abhorr'd,
And Loyalty and Faith and Ancient Laws
Follow the avenging sword.

Woe, woe to England! woe and endless shame,
If this heroic land,
False to her feelings and unspotted fame,
Hold out the olive to the Tyrant's hand!
Woe to the world, if Buonaparte's throne
Be suffer'd still to stand!
For by what names shall right and wrong be known,
What new and courtly phrases must we feign
For falsehood, murder, and all monstrous crimes,
If that perfidious Corsican maintain
Still his detested reign,
And France, who yearns even now to break her chain,
Beneath his iron rule be left to groan?
No! by the innumerable dead
Whose blood hath for his lust and power been shed,
Death only can for his foul deeds atone;
That peace which Death and Judgment can bestow,
That peace be Buonaparte's, that alone!

. . . . . .

O France! beneath this fierce Barbarian's sway
Disgraced thou art to all succeeding times;
Rapine, and blood, and fire have mark'd thy way,
All loathsome, all unutterable crimes.
A curse is on thee, France! from far and wide
It hath gone up to Heaven; all lands have cried
For vengeance upon thy detested head;
All nations curse thee, France! wheresoe'er
In peace or war thy banner hath been spread,
All forms of human woe have follow'd there:
The living and the dead
Cry out alike against thee! They who bear,
Crouching beneath its weight, thine iron yoke,
Join in the bitterness of secret prayer
The voice of that innumerable throng
Whose slaughtered spirits day and night invoke
The everlasting Judge of right and wrong,
How long, O Lord! Holy and just, how long!

. . . . . .

One man hath been for ten long wretched years
The cause of all this blood and all these tears;
One man in this most aweful point of time
Draws on thy danger, as he caused thy crime.
Wait not too long the event,
For now whole Europe comes against thee bent;
His wiles and their own strength the nations know;
Wise from past wrongs, on future peace intent,
The people and the princes, with one mind,
From all parts move against the general foe:
One act of justice, one atoning blow,
One execrable head laid low,
Even yet, O France! averts thy punishment:
Open thine eyes! too long hast thou been blind;
Take vengeance for thyself, and for mankind!

. . . . .

By those horrors which the night
Witness'd, when the torches' light
To the assembled murderers show'd
Where the blood of Condé flow'd;
By thy murder'd Pichegru's fame;
By murder'd Wright, an English name;
By murder'd Palm's atrocious doom;
By murder'd Hofer's martyrdom;
Oh! by the virtuous blood thus vilely spilt,
The villain's own peculiar private guilt,
Open thine eyes! too long hast thou been blind!
Take vengeance for thyself and for mankind!

SELECTIONS FROM FUNERAL SONG.

FOR THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES.

In its summer pride arrayed
Low our Tree of Hope is laid,
Low it lies; in evil hour,
Visiting the bridal bower,
Death hath levell'd root and flower.
Windsor, in thy sacred shade,
(That the end of pomp and power!)
Have the rites of death been paid:
Windsor, in thy sacred shade
Is the flower of Brunswick laid!

. . . . .

Henry, thou of sainted worth,
Thou, to whom thy Windsor gave

Nativity and name, and grave;
Thou art in this hallowed earth
Cradled for the immortal birth!
Heavily upon his head
Ancestral crimes were visited:
He, in spirit like a child,
Meek of heart and undefiled,
Patiently his crown resign'd,
And fixed on Heaven his heavenly mind,
Blessing while he kiss'd the rod
His Redeemer and his God.
Now may he in realms of bliss
Greet a soul as pure as his.

. . . . .

Thou, Elizabeth, art here;
Thou to whom all griefs were known;
Who wert placed upon the bier
In happier hour than on the throne.
Fatal daughter, fatal mother,
Rais'd to that ill-omen'd station,
Father, uncle, sons, and brother,
Mourn'd in blood her elevation!
Woodville in the realms of bliss,
To thine offspring thou may'st say,
Early death is happiness;
And favour'd in their lot are they
Who are not left to learn below
That length of life is length of woe.
Lightly let this ground be prest;
A broken heart is here at rest.

. . . . .

Henry, too, hath here his part;
At the gentle Seymour's side,
With his best beloved bride,
Cold and quiet here are laid
The ashes of that fiery heart.
Not with his tyrannic spirit
Shall our Charlotte's soul inherit;
No, by Fisher's hoary head,—
By More, the learned and the good,—
By Katherine's wrongs and Boleyn's blood,—
By the life so basely shed
Of the pride of Norfolk's line,
By the axe so often red,
By the fire with martyrs fed

Hateful Henry, not with thee
May her happy spirit be!
And here lies one whose tragic name
A reverential thought may claim;
That murder'd monarch, whom the grave,
Revealing its long secret, gave
Again to sight, that we might spy
His comely face and waking eye!
There, thrice fifty years, it lay,
Exempt from natural decay,
Enclosed and bright, as if to say,
A plague, of bloodier, baser birth,
Than that beneath whose rage he bled,
Was loose upon our guilty earth;
Such awful warning from the dead,
Was given from that portentous eye;
Then it closed eternally.

Ye whose relics rest around,
Tenants of this funeral ground;
Even in your immortal spheres,
What fresh yearnings will ye feel,
When this earthly guest appears!
As she leaves in grief and tears;
But to you will she reveal
Tidings of old England's weal;
Of a righteous war pursued,
Long, through evil and through good,
With unshaken fortitude;
Of peace in battle twice achieved;
Of her fiercest foe subdued,
And Europe from the yoke reliev'd,
Upon that Brabantine plain!
Such the proud, the virtuous story,
Such the great, the endless glory
Of her father's splendid reign!
He who wore the sable mail,
Might at this heroic tale,
Wish himself on earth again.

One who reverently for thee,
Rais'd the strain of bridal verse,
Flower of Brunswick! mournfully
Lays a garland on thy herse.

SELECTIONS FROM ODE WRITTEN DURING THE WAR WITH AMERICA, 1814.

WHEN shall the Island Queen of Ocean lay
The thunderbolt aside,
And, twining olives with her laurel crown,
Rest in the bower of peace?

. . . . .

Not long may this unnatural strife endure
Beyond the Atlantic deep;
Not long may men, with vain ambition drunk,
And insolent in wrong,
Afflict with their misrule the indignant land
Where Washington hath left
His awful memory
A light for after-times!
Vile instruments of fallen Tyranny
In their own annals, by their countrymen,
For lasting shame shall they be written down.
Soon may the better genius there prevail!
Then will the Island Queen of Ocean lay
The thunderbolt aside,
And, twining olives with her laurel crown,
Rest in the bower of peace.

. . . . .

Queen of the Seas! enlarge thyself;
Send thou thy swarms abroad!
For in the years to come,
Though centuries or millenniums intervene,
Where'er thy progeny,
Thy language, and thy spirit shall be found,—
If on Ontario's shores,
Or late-explored Missouri's pastures wide,
Or in that Austral world long sought,
The many-isled Pacific, yea, where waves,
Now breaking over coral reefs, affright
The venturous mariner,
When islands shall have grown, and cities risen
In cocoa groves embowered,
Where'er thy language lives,
By whatsoever name the land be called,
That land is English still, and there
Thy influential spirit dwells and reigns.
Thrones fall and dynasties are changed,
Empires decay and sink

Beneath their own unwieldy weight;
Dominion passeth like a cloud away:
The imperishable mind
Survives all meaner things.

. . . . . .

When shall the dove go forth? oh when
Shall Peace return among the sons of men?
Hasten, benignant Heaven, the blessed day!
Justice must go before,
And Retribution must make plain the way;
Force must be crushed by force,
The power of Evil by the power of Good,
Ere Order bless the suffering world once more,
Or Peace return again.
Hold, then, right on in your auspicious course,
Ye princes, and ye people! hold right on!
Your task not yet is done;
Pursue the blow,—ye know your foe,—
Complete the happy work so well begun.
Hold on, and be your aim, with all your strength,
Loudly proclaimed and steadily pursued;
So shall this fatal Tyranny at length
Before the arms of Freedom *fall subdued.*
Then, when the waters *of the flood abate,*
The dove her *resting-place secure may find;*
And France, restored and *shaking off her chain,*
Shall join the avengers *in the joyful strain,*
Glory to God! Deliverance for mankind!

THE SPANISH ARMADA.

CLEAR shone the morn, the gale was fair,
When from Coruña's crowded port,
With many a cheerful shout and loud acclaim,
The huge Armada passed.

To England's shores their streamers point,
To England's shores their sails are spread;
They go to triumph o'er the sea-girt land,
And Rome hath blest their arms,

Along the ocean's echoing verge,
Along the mountain range of rocks,
The clustering multitudes behold their pomp,
And raise the votive prayer.

Commingling with the ocean's roar,
Ceaseless and hoarse their murmurs rise;
And soon they trust to see the winged bark
That bears good tidings home.

The watch-tower now in distance sinks;
And now Galicia's mountain rocks
Faint as the far-off clouds of evening lie,
And now they fade away.

Each like some moving citadel,
On through the waves they sail sublime;
And now the Spaniards see the silvery cliffs,
Behold the sea-girt land.

O fools! to think that ever foe
Should triumph o'er that sea-girt land!
O fools! to think that ever Britain's sons
Should wear the stranger's yoke!

For not in vain hath Nature reared
Around her coasts those silvery cliffs;
For not in vain old Ocean spreads his waves
To guard his favourite isle.

On come her gallant mariners!
What now avail Rome's boasted charms?
Where are the Spaniard's vaunts of eagle wrath,
His hopes of conquest now?

And hark! the angry winds arise,
Old Ocean heaves his angry waves;
The winds and waves against the invaders fight,
To guard the sea-girt land.

REMEMBRANCE.

MAN hath a weary pilgrimage
As through the world he wends;
On every stage from youth to age
Still discontent attends;
With heaviness he casts his eye
Upon the road before,
And still remembers with a sigh
The days that are no more.

To school the little exile goes,
Torn from his mother's arms,
What then shall soothe his earliest woes,
When novelty hath lost its charms?
Condemn'd to suffer through the day
Restraints which no rewards repay,
And cares where love has no concern,
Hope lengthens as she counts the hours
Before his wish'd return.

From hard control and tyrant rules,
The unfeeling discipline of schools,
In thought he loves to roam,
And tears will struggle in his eye
While he remembers with a sigh
The comforts of his home.

Youth comes; the toils and cares of life
Torment the restless mind;
Where shall the tired and harass'd heart
Its consolation find?
Then is not Youth as Fancy tells,
Life's summer prime of joy?
Ah no! for hopes too long delay'd
And feelings blasted or betray'd,
Its fabled bliss destroy;
And youth remembers with a sigh
The careless days of Infancy.

Maturer Manhood now arrives,
And other thoughts come on,
But with the baseless hopes of Youth
Its generous warmth is gone;
Cold calculating cares succeed,
The timid thought, the wary deed,
The dull realities of truth;
Back on the past he turns his eye,
Remembering with an envious sigh
The happy dreams of youth.

So reaches he the latter stage
Of this our mortal pilgrimage,
With feeble steps and slow;
New ills that latter stage await,
And old Experience learns too late
That all is vanity below.

Life's vain delusions are gone by;
Its idle hopes are o'er;
Yet Age remembers with a sigh
The days that are no more.

Westbury, 1798.

RODERICK IN BATTLE.

(*From "Roderick, The Last of The Goths."*)

WITH that he fell upon the old man's neck;
Then vaulted in the saddle, gave the reins,
And soon rejoined the host. On, comrades, on!
Victory and Vengeance! he exclaimed, and took
The lead on that good charger, he alone
Horsed for the onset. They, with one consent,
Gave all their voices to the inspiring cry,
Victory and Vengeance! and the hills and rocks
Caught the prophetic shout and rolled it round.
Count Pedro's people heard amid the heat
Of battle, and returned the glad acclaim.
The astonished Mussulmans, on all sides charged,
Heard that tremendous cry; yet manfully
They stood, and everywhere, with gallant front,
Opposed in fair array the shock of war.
Desperately they fought, like men expert in arms,
And knowing that no safety could be found
Save from their own right hands. No former day
Of all his long career had seen their chief
Approved so well; nor had Witiza's sons
Ever before this hour achieved in fight
Such feats of resolute valour. Sisibert
Beheld Pelayo in the field afoot,
And twice essayed beneath his horse's feet
To thrust him down. Twice did the prince evade
The shock, and twice upon his shield received
The fratricidal sword. Tempt me no more,
Son of Witiza, cried the indignant chief,
Lest I forget what mother gave thee birth!
Go meet thy death from any hand but mine!
He said, and turned aside. Fitliest from me!
Exclaimed a dreadful voice, as through the throng
Orelio forced his way: fitliest from me
Receive the rightful death too long withheld!
'Tis Roderick strikes the blow! And as he spake,



"YET AGE REMEMBERS WITH A SIGH
THE DAYS THAT ARE NO MORE."—*Page* 166.

Upon the traitor's shoulder fierce he drove
The weapon, well bestowed. He in the seat
Tottered and fell. The avenger hastened on
In search of Ebba; and in the heat of fight
Rejoicing, and forgetful of all else,
Set up his cry, as he was wont in youth—
Roderick the Goth!—his war-cry known so well.

THE CURSE.

(*From "Kehama."*)

I CHARM thy life,
From weapons of strife,
From stone and from wood,
From fire and from flood,
From the serpent's tooth,
And the beast of blood.
From sickness I charm thee,
And time shall not harm thee;
But earth, which is mine,
Its fruits shall deny thee;
And water shall bear me,
And know thee and flee thee;
And the winds shall not touch thee
When they pass by thee,
And the dews shall not wet thee
When they fall nigh thee.
And thou shalt seek death,
To release thee in vain;
Thou shalt live in thy pain,
While Kehama shall reign,
With a fire in thy heart,
And a fire in thy brain.
And sleep shall obey me,
And visit thee never,
And the curse shall be on thee
Forever and ever.

THE SWERGA.

(*From "The Curse of Kehama."*)

THEN in the ship of heaven, Ereenia laid
The waking, wondering maid:
The ship of Heaven, instinct with thought displayed
Its living sail, and glides along the sky.
On either side, in wavy tide,

The clouds of morn along its path divide;
The winds, that swept in wild career on high,
Before its presence check their charmèd force:
The winds, that loitering lagged along their course,
Around the living bark enamoured play,
Swell underneath the sail, and sing before its way.

The bark, in shape, was like the furrowed shell
Wherein the sea-nymphs to their parent-king,
On festal day, their duteous offerings bring.
Its hue?—Go, watch the last green light
Ere evening yields the western sky to night;
Or fix upon the sun thy strenuous sight
Till thou hast reached its orb of chrysolite.
The sail, from end to end displayed,
Bent, like a rainbow, o'er the maid.
An angel's head, with visual eye,
Through trackless space, directs its chosen way;
Nor aid of wing nor foot nor fin
Requires to voyage o'er the obedient sky.
Smooth as the swan, when not a breeze at even
Disturbs the surface of the silver stream,
Through air and sunshine sails the ship of Heaven.
Recumbent there the maiden glides along
On her aërial way;
How swift she feels not, though the swiftest wind
Had flagged in flight behind.
Motionless as a sleeping babe she lay,
And all serene in mind,
Feeling no fear; for that ethereal air
With such new life and joyance filled her heart,
Fear could not enter there:
For sure she deemed her mortal part was o'er,
And she was sailing to the heavenly shore,
And that angelic form, who moved beside,
Was some good spirit sent to be her guide.

. . . . .

Through air and sunshine sails the ship of Heaven:
Far, far beneath them lies
The gross and heavy atmosphere of earth;
And, with the Swerga gales,
The maid of mortal birth
At every breath a new delight inhales.
And now towards its port the ship of Heaven,
Swift as a falling meteor, shapes its flight,



"RECUMBENT THERE THE MAIDEN GLIDES ALONG ON HER AERIAL WAY."—*Page* 168.

Yet gently as the dews of night that gem,
And do not bend the harebell's slenderest stem.
"Daughter of Earth!" Ereenia cried, "alight;
This is thy place of rest, the Swerga, this;
Lo, here my bower of bliss!"

FROM KEHAMA.

O FORCE of faith! O strength of virtuous will!
Behold him in his endless martyrdom,
Triumphant still!
The curse still burning in his heart and brain,
And yet doth he remain,
Patient the while, and tranquil, and content!
The pious soul hath framed unto itself
A second nature, to exist in pain
As in its own allotted element.
. . . . .
Such strength the will reveal'd had given
This holy pair, such influxes of grace,
That to their solitary resting place
They brought the peace of Heaven.
Yea, all around was hallow'd! Danger, fear,
Nor thought of evil ever entered here.
A charm was on the leopard when he came
Within the circle of that mystic glade;
Submiss he crouch'd before the heavenly maid,
And offer'd to her touch his speckled side:
Or with arch'd back erect, and bending head,
And eyes half-closed for pleasure, would he stand
Courting the pressure of her gentle hand.

FROM KEHAMA.

THEY sin who tell us Love can die:
With life all other passions fly,
All others are but vanity.
Love is indestructible:
Its holy flame forever burneth;
From Heaven it came, to Heaven returneth.

Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times oppress;
It here is tried and purified,

And hath in Heaven its perfect rest.
It soweth here with toil and care,
But the harvest-time of Love is there.

Oh! when a mother meets on high
The babe she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then for pains and fears,
The day of woe, the watchful night,
For all her sorrow, all her tears,
An over-payment of delight?

(Canto X.)

Thou hast been called, O Sleep! the friend
of woe;
But 'tis the happy that have called thee so.

(Canto XV.)

FROM THALABA.

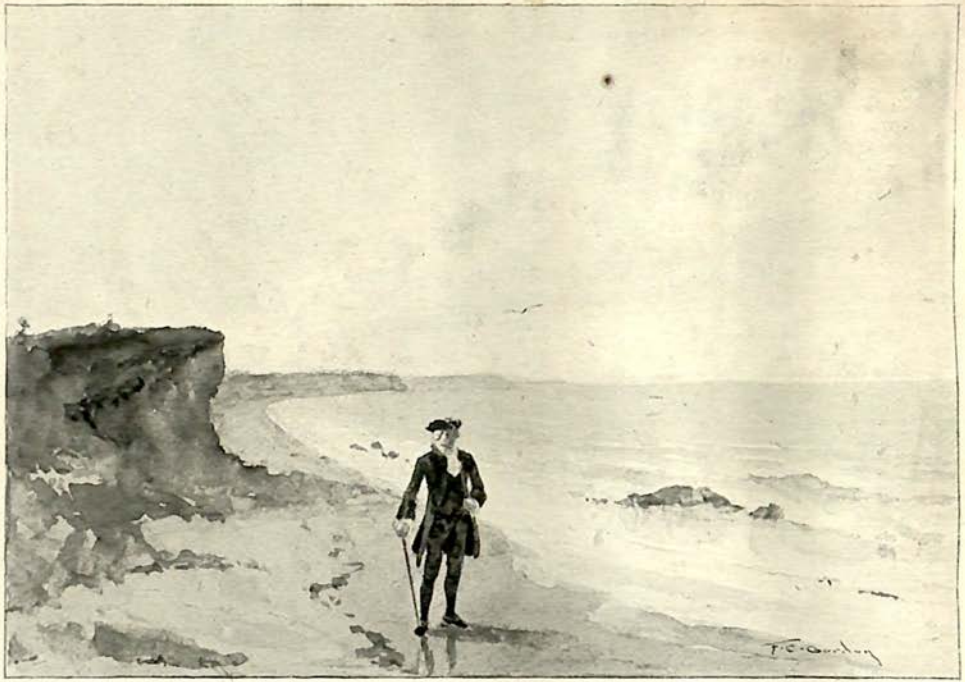
How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain,
Breaks the serene of heaven:
In full-orbed glory, yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert circle spreads,
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night!

FROM MADOC.

THOUGH in blue ocean seen
Blue, darkly, deeply, beautifully blue.

THE SOURCE OF THE GANGES.

NONE hath seen its secret fountain;
But on the top of Meru mountain,
Which rises o'er the hills of earth,
In light and clouds, it hath its mortal birth.
Earth seems that pinnacle to rear
Sublime above this worldly sphere.
Its cradle, and its altar, and its throne;



"HOW BEAUTIFUL BENEATH THE BRIGHT BLUE SKY
THE BILLOWS HEAVE!"—*Page* 171.

And there the new-born river lies
Outspread beneath its native skies,
As if it there would love to dwell
Alone and unapproachable.

THE SEA.

How beautiful beneath the bright blue sky
The billows heave! one glowing green expanse,
Save where along the bending line of shore
Such hue is thrown as when the peacock's neck
Assumes its proudest tint of amethyst
Embraced in emerald glory.

IMPULSE.

And happy they who thus in faith obey
Their better nature: err sometimes they may,
And some sad thoughts lie heavy in the breast;
Such as, by Hope deceived, are left behind;
But like a shadow these will pass away
From the pure sunshine of the peaceful mind.

FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

Idly, rajah, dost thou reason thus
Of destiny! for though all other things
Were subject to the starry influences,
And bowed submissive to thy tyranny,

The virtuous heart and resolute mind are free.
Thus, in their wisdom did the gods decree,
When they created man. Let come what will,
This is our rock of strength in every ill.

THE EBB-TIDE.

Slowly the flowing tide
Came in, old Avon! Scarcely did mine eyes,
As watchfully I roamed thy greenwood side,
Perceive its gentle rise.

With many a stroke and strong
The labouring boatmen upward plied their oars;
Yet little way they made, though labouring long
Between thy winding shores.

Now down thine ebbing tide
The unlaboured boat falls rapidly along:
The solitary helmsman sits to guide,
And sings an idle song.

Now o'er the rocks that lay
So silent late the shallow current roars;
Fast flow thy waters on their seaward way
Through wider-spreading shores.

Avon, I gaze and know
The lesson emblemed in thy varying way;
It speaks of human joys that rise so slow,
So rapidly decay.

Kingdoms which long have stood
And slow to strength and power attained at last,
Thus from the summit of high fortune's flood,
They ebb to ruin fast.

Thus like thy flow appears
Time's tardy course to manhood's envied stage.
Alas! how hurryingly the ebbing years
Then hasten to old age.

THE DEAD FRIEND.

NOT to the grave, not to the grave, my soul,
Descend to contemplate
The form that once was dear:
The spirit is not there
Which kindled that dead eye,
Which throbbed in that cold heart,
Which in that motionless hand
Hath met thy friendly grasp;
The spirit is not there!
It is but lifeless, perishable flesh
That moulders in the grave;
Earth, air, and water's ministering particles
Now to the elements
Resolved, their uses done.
Not to the grave, not to the grave, my soul,
Follow thy friend beloved;
The spirit is not there.

Often together have we talked of death;
How sweet it were to see
All doubtful things made clear;
How sweet it were, with powers
Such as the Cherubim,
To view the depth of heaven!
O Edmund! thou hast first begun the travel of
Eternity!
I look upon the stars,
And think that thou art there,
Unfettered as the thought that follows thee.

And we have often said how sweet it were,
With unseen ministry of angel power,
To watch the friends we loved.
Edmund! we did not err!
Sure I have felt thy presence! Thou hast given
A birth to holy thought,
Hast kept me from the world unstained and pure.
Edmund! we did not err!
Our best affections here
They are not like the toys of infancy;
The soul outgrows them not;
We do not cast them off:
Oh, if it could be so,
It were indeed a dreadful thing to die!

Not to the grave, not to the grave, my soul,
Follow thy friend beloved;
But in the lonely hour,
But in the evening walk,
Think that he companies thy solitude;
Think that he holds with thee
Mysterious intercourse;
And, though remembrance wake a tear,
There will be joy in grief.

INSCRIPTION.

FOR A CAVERN THAT OVERLOOKS THE RIVER AVON.

ENTER this cavern, stranger! Here, awhile
Respiring from the long and steep ascent,
Thou mayst be glad of rest, and haply too
Of shade, if from the summer's westering sun
Sheltered beneath this beetling vault of rock.

Round the rude portal clasping its rough arms,
The antique ivy spreads a canopy,
From whose gray blossoms the wild bees collect
In autumn their last store. The muses love
This spot; believe a poet who hath felt
Their visitation here. The tide below,
Rising or refluent, scarcely sends its sound
Of waters up; and from the heights beyond,
Where the high-hanging forest waves and sways,
Varying before the wind its verdant hues,
The voice is music here. Here thou mayst feel
How good, how lovely, Nature! And when, hence
Returning to the city's crowded streets,
Thy sickening eye at every step revolts
From scenes of vice and wretchedness, reflect
That man creates the evil he endures.

FROM THE ROSE.

NAY, Edith! spare the rose: perhaps it lives,
And feels the noontide sun, and drinks refreshed
The dews of night. Let not thy gentle hand
Tear its life-strings asunder and destroy
The sense of being!

THE TRAVELLER'S RETURN.

SWEET to the morning traveller
The song amid the sky;
Where, twinkling in the dewy light,
The skylark soars on high.

And cheering to the traveller
The gales that round him play,
When faint and heavily he drags
Along his noon-tide way.

And when beneath the unclouded sun
Full wearily toils he,
The flowing water makes to him
A soothing melody.

And when the evening light decays,
And all is calm around,
There is sweet music to his ear
In the distant sheep-bell's sound,



"NAY, EDITH! SPARE THE ROSE."—*Page* 174.

But oh! of all delightful sounds
Of evening or of morn,
The sweetest is the voice of Love,
That welcomes his return.

THE OLD MAN'S COMFORTS, AND HOW HE GAINED THEM.

YOU are old, Father William, the young man cried;
The few locks which are left you are gray;
You are hale, Father William, a hearty old man;
Now tell me the reason, I pray.

In the days of my youth, Father William replied,
I remember'd that youth would fly fast,
And abused not my health and my vigour at first,
That I never might need them at last.

You are old, Father William, the young man cried,
And pleasures with youth pass away;
And yet you lament not the days that are gone
Now tell me the reason, I pray.

In the days of my youth, Father William replied,
I remember'd that youth could not last;
I thought of the future, whatever I did,
That I never might grieve for the past.

You are old, Father William, the young man cried,
And life must be hastening away;
You are cheerful, and love to converse upon death;
Now tell me the reason, I pray.

I am cheerful, young man, Father William replied;
Let the cause thy attention engage;
In the days of my youth I remember'd my God!
And He hath not forgotten my age.

FROM THE DEVIL'S WALK.

HE owned with a grin
That his favourite sin
Is pride that apes humility.

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.

IT was a summer evening;
Old Kasper's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun;
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet,
In playing there, had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kasper took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
"'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory.

"I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out;
For many thousand men," said he,
"Were slain in that great victory."

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
Young Peterkin he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for."

"It was the English," Kasper cried,
"Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out;
But everybody said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory.

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;

They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

"With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby died:
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

"They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know must be
After a famous victory.

"Great praise the Duke of Malbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene."
"Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!"
Said little Wilhelmine.
"Nay—nay—my little girl," quoth he,
"It was a famous victory.

"And everybody praised the duke,
Who this great fight did win."
"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin.
"Why, that I cannot tell," said he;
"But 'twas a famous victory."

THE WELL OF ST. KEYNE.

"I know not whether it be worth the reporting that there is in Cornwall, near the parish of St. Neots, a Well, arched over with the robes of four kinds of trees, withy, oak, elm, and ash, dedicated to St. Keyne. The reported virtue of the water is this, that whether husband or wife come first, to drink thereof, they get the mastery thereby."—FULLER.

A WELL there is in the west country,
And a clearer one was never seen;
There is not a wife in the west country
But has heard of the Well of St. Keyne.

An oak and an elm-tree stand beside,
And behind doth an ash-tree grow,
And a willow from the bank above
Droops to the water below.

A traveller came to the Well of St. Keyne;
Joyfully he drew nigh,
For from cock-crow he had been travelling,
And there was not a cloud in the sky.

He drank of the water so cool and clear,
For thirsty and hot was he;
And he sat down upon the bank
Under the willow-tree.

There came a man from the house hard by,
At the Well to fill his pail;
On the Well-side he rested it,
And he bade the stranger hail.

"Now art thou a bachelor, Stranger?" quoth he;
"For an if thou hast a wife,
The happiest draught thou hast drank this day
That ever thou didst in thy life.

"Or has thy good woman, if one thou hast,
Ever here in Cornwall been?
For an if she have, I'll venture my life,
She has drunk of the Well of St. Keyne."

"I have left a good woman who never was here,"
The Stranger he made reply;
"But that my draught should be the better for that,
I pray you answer me why."

"St. Keyne," quoth the Cornish-man, "many a time
Drank of this crystal Well;
And before the Angel summon'd her,
She laid on the water a spell.

"If the Husband of this gifted Well
Shall drink before his Wife,
A happy man thenceforth is he,
For he shall be master for life.

"But if the Wife should drink of it first,—
God help the Husband then!"
The Stranger stoop'd to the Well of St. Keyne,
And drank of the water again.

"You drank of the Well, I warrant, betimes?"
He to the Cornish-man said:
But the Cornish-man smiled as the Stranger spake,
And sheepishly shook his head.

"I hasten'd as soon as the wedding was done,
And left my Wife in the porch;
But i' faith she had been wiser than me,
For she took a bottle to church."

THE CATARACT OF LODORE.

(*Described in Rhymes for the Nursery.*)

"How does the Water
Come down at Lodore?"
My little boy ask'd me
Thus, once on a time!
And moreover he task'd me
To tell him in rhyme.
Anon at the word,
There came first one daughter,
And then came another,
To second and third
The request of their brother,
And to hear how the water
Comes down at Lodore,
With its rush and its roar,
As many a time
They had seen it before.
So I told them in rhyme,
For of rhymes I had store;
And 'twas in my vocation
For their recreation
That so I should sing;
Because I was Laureate
To them and the King.

From its sources which well
In the Tarn on the fell;

From its fountains
In the mountains,
Its rills and its gills;
Through moss and through brake,
It runs and it creeps
For awhile, till it sleeps
In its own little Lake.
And thence at departing,
Awakening and starting,
It runs through the reeds,
And away it proceeds,
Through meadow and glade,
In sun and in shade,
And through the wood-shelter
Among crags in its flurry,
Helter-skelter,
Hurry-scurry.
Here it comes sparkling,
And there it lies darkling;
Now smoking and frothing
Its tumult and wrath in,
Till in this rapid race
On which it is bent,
It reaches the place
Of its deep descent.

The Cataract strong
Then plunges along,
Striking and raging
As if a war waging
Its caverns and rocks among;
Rising and leaping,
Sinking and creeping,
Swelling and sweeping,
Showering and springing,
Flying and flinging,
Writhing and ringing,
Eddying and whisking,
Spouting and frisking,
Turning and twisting,
Around and around
With endless rebound:
Smiting and fighting,
A sight to delight in;
Confounding, astounding,
Dizzying and deafening the ear with its sour

Collecting, projecting,
Receding and speeding,
And shocking and rocking,
And darting and parting,
And threading and spreading,
And whizzing and hissing,
And dripping and skipping,
And hitting and splitting,
And shining and twining,
And rattling and battling,
And shaking and quaking,
And pouring and roaring,
And waving and raving,
And tossing and crossing,
And flowing and going,
And running and stunning,
And foaming and roaming,
And dinning and spinning,
And dropping and hopping,
And working and jerking,
And guggling and struggling,
And heaving and cleaving,
And moaning and groaning;

And glittering and frittering,
And gathering and feathering,
And whitening and brightening,
And quivering and shivering,
And hurrying and skurrying,
And thundering and floundering;

Dividing and gliding and sliding
And falling and brawling and sprawling,
And driving and riving and striving,
And sprinkling and twinkling and wrinkling,
And sounding and bounding and rounding,
And bubbling and troubling and doubling,
And grumbling and rumbling and tumbling,
And clattering and battering and shattering;

Retreating and beating and meeting and sheeting,
Delaying and straying and playing and spraying,
Advancing and prancing and glancing and dancing,
Recoiling, turmoiling and toiling and boiling,
And gleaming and streaming and steaming and beaming,
And rushing and flushing and brushing and gushing,

And flapping and rapping and clapping and slapping,
And curling and whirling and purling and twirling,
And thumping and plumping and bumping and jumping,
And dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing,
And so never ending, but always descending,
Sounds and motions forever and ever are blending,
All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar,
And this way the Water comes down at Lodore.

THE INCHCAPE ROCK.

An old writer mentions a curious tradition which may be worth quoting. "By east the Isle of May," says he, "twelve miles from all land in the German seas, lyes a great hidden rock, called Inchcape, very dangerous for navigators, because it is overflowed everie tide. It is reported, in old times, upon the saide rock there was a bell, fixed upon a tree or timber, which rang continually, being moved by the sea, given notice to the saylers of the danger. This bell or clocke was put there and maintained by the Abbott of Aberbrothok, and being taken down by a sea pirate, a yeare thereafter he perished upon the same rocke with ship and goodes, in the righteous Judgement of God."—STODDARD'S *Remarks on Scotland.*

NO stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was still as she could be;
Her sails from heaven received no motion;
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock,
The waves flow'd over the Inchcape Rock;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed the Bell on the Inchcape Rock;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,
The mariners heard the warning Bell;
And they knew the perilous Rock,
And blest the Abbott of Aberbrothok.

The sun in heaven was shining gay;
All things were joyful on that day;
The sea-birds scream'd as they wheel'd round,
And there was joyance in their sound.

The buoy of Inchcape Bell was seen
A darker speck on the ocean green;
Sir Ralph the Rover walk'd his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring;
It made him whistle, it made him sing;
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float:
Quoth he, "My men, put out the boat,
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lower'd, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,
And he cut the Bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound;
The bubbles rose and burst around;
Quoth Sir Ralph, "The next who comes to the
Rock
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

Sir Ralph the Rover sail'd away;
He scour'd the seas for many a day;
And now, grown rich with plunder'd store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky,
They cannot see the Sun on high;
The wind hath blown a gale all day;
At evening it hath died away.

On deck the Rover takes his stand;
So dark it is they see no land.
Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore."
"Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound; the swell is strong,
Though the wind had fallen, they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,—
"Oh, Christ! it is the Inchcape Rock!"

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair;
He curs'd himself in his despair;
The waves rushed in on every side;
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But, even in his dying fear,
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear—
A sound as if, with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN MY LIBRARY.

My days among the dead are pass'd;
Around me I behold
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old.
My never failing friends are they
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedew'd
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the dead; with them
I live in long-past years;
Their virtues love, their faults condemn
Partake their hopes and fears,
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the dead; anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all futurity:
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

EPITAPH.

THIS to a mother's sacred memory
Her son hath hallow'd. Absent many a year
Far over sea, his sweetest dreams were still
Of that dear voice which soothed his infancy;

And after many a fight against the Moor
And Malabar, or that fierce cavalry
Which he had seen covering the boundless plain,
Even to the utmost limits where the eye
Could pierce the far horizon,—his first thought
In safety was of her, who, when she heard
The tale of that day's danger, would retire
And pour her pious gratitude to Heaven
In prayers and tears of joy. The lingering hour
Of his return, long-look'd-for, came at length,
And full of hope he reach'd his native shore.
Vain hope that puts its trust in human life!
For ere he came, the number of her days
Was full. O Reader, what a world were this,
How unendurable its weight, if they
Whom Death hath sunder'd did not meet again!

TO MARY WOLSTONECRAFT.

BRISTOL, 1795.

THE lily cheek, the "purple light of love,"
The liquid lustre of the melting eye,
Mary! of these the poet sung, for these
Did woman triumph: turn not thou away
Contemptuous from the theme. No Maid of Arc
Had, in those ages, for her country's cause
Wielded the sword of freedom; no Roland
Had borne the palm of female fortitude;
No Cordé, with self-sacrificing zeal,
Had glorified again the Avenger's name,
As erst when Cæsar perished: happy, too,
Some strains may hence be drawn, befitting me
To offer, nor unworthy thy regard.

SELECTIONS FROM THE SONNETS.

I.

FAIR is the rising morn when o'er the sky
The orient sun expands his roseate ray;
And lovely to the musing poet's eye
Fades the soft radiance of departing day;
But fairer is the smile of one we love,
Than all the scenes in nature's ample sway;
And sweeter than the music of the grove,

The voice that bids us welcome. Such delight,
Edith! is mine, escaping to thy sight
From the cold converse of the indifferent throng
Too swiftly then toward the silent night,
Ye hours of happiness, ye speed along,
Whilst I, from all the world's dull cares apart,
Pour out the feelings of my burdened heart.

II.

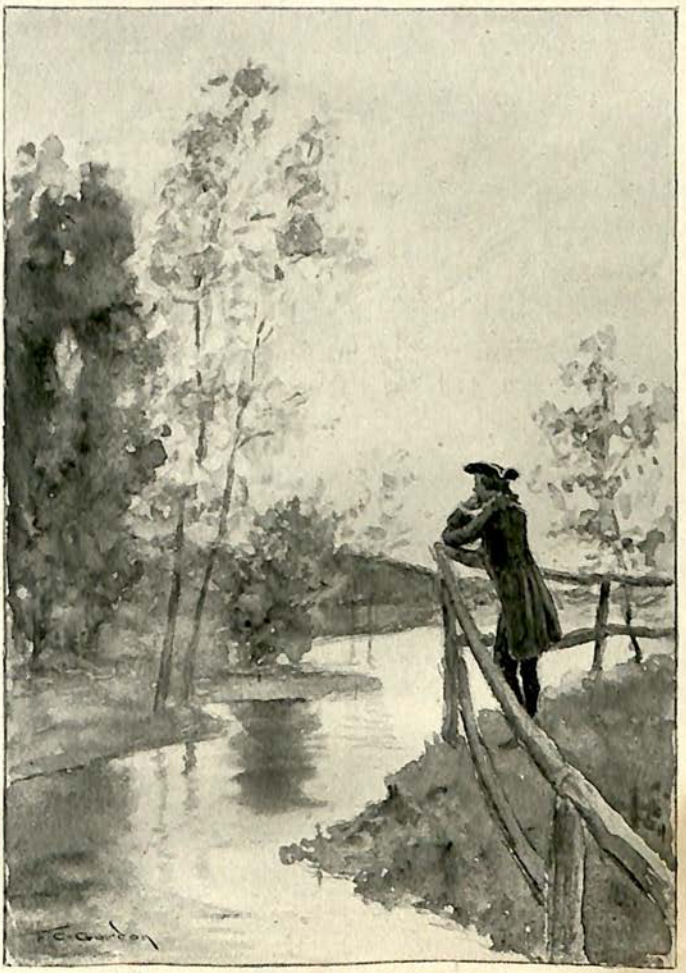
How darkly o'er yon far-off mountain frowns
The gathered tempest! from that lurid cloud
The deep-voiced thunders roll, awful and loud,
Though distant; while upon the misty downs
Fast falls in shadowy streaks the pelting rain.
I never saw so terrible a storm!
Perhaps some way-worn traveller in vain
Wraps his thin raiment round his shivering form,
Cold even as hope within him. I the while
Pause here in sadness, though the sunbeams smile
Cheerily around me. Ah, that thus my lot
Might be with peace and solitude assigned,
Where I might from some little quiet cot
Sigh for the crimes and miseries of mankind.

III.

O THOU sweet Lark! who, in the heaven so high!
Twinkling thy wings, dost sing so joyfully!
I watch thee soaring with a deep delight,
And, when at last I turn my waking eye
That lags below thee in the infinite,
Still in my heart receive thy melody.
O thou sweet Lark! that I had wings like thee!
Not for the joy it were in yon blue light
Upward to mount, and from my heavenly height
Gaze on the creeping multitude below;
But that I soon would wing my eager flight
To that loved home where Fancy even now
Hath fled, and Hope looks onward through a tear,
Counting the weary hours that hold her here.

IV.

THOU lingerest, Spring! still wintry is the scene;
The fields their dead and sapless russet wear;
Scarce doth the glossy celandine appear
Starring the sunny bank, or early green



"AS THUS I STAND BESIDE THE MURMURING STREAM."
—*Page* 187.

The elder yet its circling tufts put forth;
  The sparrow tenants still the eaves-built nest,
  Where we should see our martin's snowy breast
Oft darting out; the blasts from the bleak north,
And from the keener blast, still frequent blow.
Sweet Spring! thou lingerest; and it should be so:
  Late let the fields and gardens blossom out!
Like man when most with smiles thy face is dressed,
'Tis to deceive; and he who knows ye best,
  When most ye promise, ever most must doubt.

V.

As thus I stand beside the murmuring stream,
  And watch its current, memory here portrays
  Scenes faintly formed of half-forgotten days,
Like far-off woodlands by the moon's bright beam
Dimly descried, but lonely. I have worn
  Amid these haunts the heavy hours away
  When childhood idled through the Sabbath day;
Risen to my tasks at winter's earliest morn;
  And, when the summer twilight darkened here,
Thinking of home, and all of heart forlorn,
  Have sighed, and shed in secret many a tear.
  Dreamlike and indistinct those days appear,
As the faint sounds of this low brooklet borne
  Upon the breeze, reach fitfully the ear.

SONNET TO THE EVENING RAINBOW.

MILD arch of promise! on the evening sky
  Thou shinest fair with many a lovely ray,
Each in the other melting. Much mine eye
  Delights to linger on thee; for the day,
Changeful and many-weathered, seemed to smile
Flashing brief splendour through its clouds awhile,
  Which deepened dark anon, and fell in rain:
But pleasant it is now to pause, and view
Thy various tints of frail and watery hue,
  And think the storm shall not return again.
Such is the smile that piety bestows
  On the good man's pale cheek, when he, in peace
Departing gently from a world of woes,
  Anticipates the realm where sorrows cease.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Born at Cockermouth, Cumberland, in 1770. Made Laureate in 1843. Died at Rydal Mount in 1850.

(Reign of Victoria.)

IT is quite easy to point out, as many critics are fond of doing, the limitations of Wordsworth's genius. He was often trammelled by his theories; his mind was somewhat rigid and inflexible; he had no humour; he wrote often without inspiration, hence is prolix and tedious; his subject-matter is sometimes trivial or of such a philosophical nature as to lie outside of the domain of true poetry, and when he wrote in this manner his diction, too, differs little from that of prose. He is therefore one of the most unequal of poets. But judging Wordsworth by his best, his most characteristic work, it must be conceded that he is the greatest poet of modern England—with the single exception of Goethe, the greatest poet of the modern world.

A high claim—but it is made because Wordsworth not only deals in so transcendently beautiful and original a manner with the beauty and the glory of the outward world; or treats with such power certain primitive characteristics of humanity and vindicates the dramatic interest which belongs to the personality of man apart from all social or political conditions; but because he furnishes so much for the human spirit to rest on; he points to such deep springs of joy; he appeals not only to the heart and its affections, or to the imagination and the artistic sense, but he has a direct influence upon the human will; having himself lived from a "great depth of being," he creates high thinking, he stimulates the noblest impulses and ministers with irresistible power to the health of the soul.

Wordsworth from the first believed in the sacredness of his message to the world, that his mission was to reveal a "glory very near but sealed to the many"; and because he had this new revelation of spiritual truth, his poetry has become a priceless heritage for all future poets, and by its formative influences has widened the range of poetry forever.

The supremacy of Wordsworth's poetry is assured because it has that surest safeguard against oblivion: his teaching has, as Lowell said, become a part of the air we breathe. His poetry is as immortal as the heart of man!



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

The common idea of Wordsworth is that he is the high priest of nature—that having spent his life among hills and lakes he has seized every phase of their scenery and painted it in detail. But Wordsworth's distinctive originality does not consist in his descriptive powers. Before him there had been poets who loved nature and described with charm and power the varied objects that make up her loveliness. Wordsworth had an intense consciousness of the loveliness or the grandeur of nature; it came to him with the force, the magic, the splendour of a new discovery. Vivid delight came to him not only at the moment of perception, but long afterwards, for he speaks of the dear remembrances of outward scenes, of the tranquil restoration in those remembrances.

Wordsworth is indeed a minute observer of nature's manifold and changing forms, and a describer of her individual beauties. But he is more than this. He looks at a scene as a whole, seeks the source of its mystery, of its charm or its grandeur; his impassioned and meditative imagination penetrates to the very life, the soul of things. By this process he not only gets a deeper sense of beauty, a perception of the spiritual reality which lies back of all natural manifestations, but, at the same time, the heart and mind of man are more profoundly understood. Every beautiful appearance of the sky or of the earth, possessing, as it does, a sentiment of its own, which is not a creation of the observer's mood, but an emanation from its own separate life, has a distinct influence upon the mind of man. Wordsworth deals with this influence. It is this treatment of nature and man in union which, more than anything else, constitutes Wordsworth's claim to being the prophet of a new revelation. He perceived an exquisite adaptation of nature to the mind of man, and the mind of man to the outward world. The joy which finds such frequent mention in his verse comes from the "living presence" of nature, which has an active power of her own distinct from man coming in contact with the soul of man, which has the power to perceive and feel. This reciprocal action is therefore the haunt and main region of Wordsworth's song.

Then he gives not only a sublime explanation of man's intellect in its subtle relations to external things, but of man's moral and spiritual affinities to the Soul of the world. To treat nature and man as Wordsworth treats them, is, as De Vere beautifully says, to see the Invisible. Without God the beneficent ministry of nature would be but mockery; indeed, without him nature could not be the "quickener of the finest impulses of the soul." God and Immortality, as well as man and nature, are the subjects of Wordsworth's impassioned and majestic verse. He had a most glorious vision of spiritual

truth revealed to him, "a glory very near but sealed to the many," and where he deals with this vision as he does in his best and most characteristic poetry, his language has an intensity, a majesty of style, a power, a mastery of touch, which is unequalled among modern poets.

It was an outgrowth of Wordsworth's mode of viewing man as moulded by the influences of nature, that when he came to treat life concretely, deal with individual men and women, he should choose just the characters he did. Wordsworth treats life in the spirit of art, but still more with the earnestness of the moralist. He treats it powerfully, profoundly,—its passion, its pathos, its tragedy,—and he seeks in lowly places, among solitary, pastoral scenes, for some of the highest examples of heroism, of patience, of self-control, of unselfish love. The democratic ideas Wordsworth cherished in his youth had a marked influence upon the development of his genius. 'It is the personal being, man as he is in himself, the primitive type, that Wordsworth values. "Wordsworth's distinctive work," says Ruskin, "was a war with pomp and pretence, and a display of the majesty of simple feelings and humble hearts, together with high reflective truths in his analysis of the courses of policies and ways of men; without these his love of Nature would have been comparatively worthless." Walter Pater says: "A sort of biblical depth and solemnity hangs over this strange, new, passionate, pastoral world, of which he first raised the image, and the reflection of which some of our best modern fiction has caught from him."

By thus "redeeming from decay the visitations of the divinity in man," and linking that divinity to every lovely manifestation of sea and sky and earth, and making of the material a bridge to lead humanity up to the supreme, the spiritual reality, Wordsworth has proved himself to be the great poet that he is.

But our space is wholly inadequate to a discussion of the peculiarties of Wordsworth's genius. His poetry must itself be read over and over again. A certain poem may not only be enchanting or of interest in itself, but it also forms a part of a harmonious system. "The Prelude" and "The Recluse" composed between the years 1799 and 1805, trace the growth of his mind, how it had been moulded by the awe and the love inspired by the majesty and the beauty of Nature's sights and sounds; how thoughts of his high mission had come to him in childhood, but had been obscured by the failure of his political hopes, though afterwards restored and strengthened by the influence of his beloved sister Dorothy; finally when he settled with her in the home at Grasmere, his vague aspirations became crystallised into a deliberate and

conscious purpose. "Tintern Abbey," written in 1798 and published among the famous "Lyrical Ballads" (which also contained "We are Seven"), was the first notable expression of Wordsworth's spirituality of vision, of his perception of nature's subtle relations to man and to Infinitude. This poem "introduced into English poetry an element which it never had before, and has never parted with since." The same imaginative grasp of relations and influences made the "Ode on Immortality" so great a poem. "An Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty," composed in 1818, is, perhaps, Wordsworth's last powerful expression of that peculiar "ethereal gleam," that visionary light, which from childhood he had seen resting upon all natural objects. For an understanding of the essential features of Wordsworth's poetry a study of these three poems is indispensable.*

Wordsworth's life extended over the long period of eighty years. It was a life distinguished from first to last for its unflinching virtue, its unworldliness, its devotion to high ideals; for its tenderness for his sister, his wife, his children, and friends; for its earnest and thoughtful patriotism. To Wordsworth can well be applied his own famous lines on Milton:

> "Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart;
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
> Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
> So didst thou travel on life's common way,
> In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
> The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

Because Wordsworth had to create the taste to judge rightly the poetical work which was to mark an epoch in English poetry, he had to wait long for recognition and justice, and while waiting with such serenity and patience, he had meanwhile to endure much ridicule from men even of ability. But victory came at last, and the world came round to Wordsworth. The triumph at Oxford was the first tangible evidence that what he had done for England was being felt at last. Thirty years before, Southey had said in reference to Jeffrey's boast that he would crush "The Excursion": "He crush 'The Excursion'? He might as well try to crush Mount Skiddaw."

* To our surprise Matthew Arnold did not include "An Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty" in his famous book of Selections. In making our selections from such a poet as Wordsworth, it is almost impossible to do him justice in the space at our command. We are compelled to omit many of his finest pastoral poems, and of the wonderful sonnets we can give only a few. In the absence of the biographical details which are well-known to every student of English poetry, we have given some stray poems under the title of "Self Portraiture"; have linked together the famous Lucy Poems; those relating to Dorothy and to Mrs Wordsworth; and have chosen lines from "The Prelude," "The Recluse," and "The Excursion," which are of great value in a study of the growth of the poet's mind under the influences of nature's sights and sounds.

Now, in 1843, when Southey died, Sir Robert Peel in a letter full of tender and grateful feeling proffered to Wordsworth the Laureateship of England. But this honour came to a man old in years, whose spirit had been saddened by many sorrows. He refused at first, but Peel and the Lord Chamberlain both wrote again.

The victory of Wordsworth's poetry was not alone because it was so great, so formative, so wide in range; but because the poet in it spoke to the world in his real voice, because he was sincere, with that truth and that sincerity which belongs to a strong nature, to a serious and lofty soul.

SELECTIONS FROM WORDSWORTH.

THE POET LAUREATE.

(*From "The Russian Fugitive."*)

'Tis sung in ancient minstrelsy
That Phœbus wont to wear
The leaves of any pleasant tree
Around his golden hair;
'Till Daphne, desperate with pursuit
Of his imperious love,
At her own prayer transformed, took root,
A laurel in the grove.

Then did the Penitent adorn
His brow with laurel green;
And mid his bright locks never shorn
No meaner leaf was seen;
And poets sage, through every age,
About their temples wound
The bay; and conquerors thanked the Gods,
With laurel chaplets crowned.

1830.

THE POET.

I.

If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven
Then to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine Poet, in thy place, and be content.

1832.

II.

A poet!—he hath put his heart to school,
Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
Which Art hath lodged within his hand—must laugh
By precept only, and shed tears by rule.

Thy Art be nature; the live current quaff,
And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
In fear that else, when critics grave and cool
Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
How does the meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and in that freedom bold;
And so the grandeur of the forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
But from its *own* divine vitality.

1842.

III.

THE poet, gentle creature as he is
Hath, like the lover, his unruly times;
His fits when he is neither sick nor well,
Though no distress be near him but his own
Unmanageable thoughts.

—*The Prelude.*

Prelude and Recluse composed 1799–1805.

SELF-PORTRAITURE.

I.

(*From "Poet's Epitaph."*)

BUT who is he with modest looks
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew
Or fountain in a noonday grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Or hill and valley, he has view'd;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart—
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

1799.

II.

How pure his spirit—in what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things,
Caught in their fairest, happiest attitude!
—*The Excursion. Book IX.*

III.

For I would walk alone,
Under the quiet stars, and at that time
Have felt what e'er there is of *power in sound*
To breathe an elevated mood, by form
Or image unprofaned; and I would stand
If the night blackened with a coming storm,
Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are
The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
Thence did I drink the visionary power;
And deem not profitless those fleeting moods
Of shadowy exultation.
— *The Prelude. Book II.*

IV.

"THERE WAS A BOY."

There was a boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him. And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled—concourse wild
Of mirth and jocund din! And when it chanced
That pauses of deep silence mocked his skill,
Then sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene

Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

1799.

V.

PERSONAL TALK.

I AM not one who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours daily, weekly, in my sight;
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like forms with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

"YET life," you say, "is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
Even be it so; yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
And part far from them: sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a slave; the meanest we can meet!

WINGS have we; and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear—
The gentle lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb.

NOR can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought.
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares—
The poets who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

1806.

POEMS RELATING TO WORDSWORTH'S MISSION, THE GROWTH OF HIS MIND, THE SUBJECTS OF HIS VERSE.

I.

FAIR seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:

. . . .

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. How strange, that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself.

. . .

Wisdom and spirit of the universe!
Thou soul that art the eternity of thought!

And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain.
By day or starlight, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul:
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,—
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours, rolling down the valleys, made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, I homeward went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
'Twas mine among the fields both day and night,
And by the waters all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons;—happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me
It was a time of rapture!—Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting, like an untired horse
That cares not for its home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polish'd ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tingled like iron; while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the image of a star,
That gleamed upon the ice; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

—*The Prelude. Book I.*

II.

FOR the man,
Who, in this spirit, communes with the forms
Of Nature; who, with understanding heart,
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred, needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
A holy tenderness pervades his frame.
His sanity of reason not impaired,
Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good; and finds the good he seeks;
Until abhorrence and contempt are things
He only knows by name: and if he hear
From other mouths, the language which they speak,
He is compassionate: and has no thought,
No feeling, which can overcome his love.

And further; by contemplating these forms
In the relations which they bear to man,
He shall discern, how, through the various means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things,
Convoked by knowledge; and for his delight
Still ready to obey the gentle call.

Trust me, that for the instructed, time will come
When they shall meet no object but may teach
Some acceptable lesson to their minds
Of human suffering, or of human joy.
So they shall learn, while all things speak of man,
Their duties from all forms; and general laws,
And local accidents, shall tend alike
To rouse, to urge, and with the will confer
The ability to spread the blessings wide
Of true philanthropy. The light of love
Not failing, perseverance from their steps
Departing not, for them shall be confirmed
The glorious habit by which sense is made
Subservient still to moral purposes,
Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe
The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore
The burthen of existence. Science then
Shall be a precious visitant; and then,
And only then, be worthy of her name.
For then her heart shall kindle; her dull eye,
Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang
Chained to its object in brute slavery;
But taught with patient interest to watch
The processes of things, and serve the cause
Of order and distinctness, not for this
Shall it forget that its most noble use,
Its most illustrious province, must be found
In furnishing clear guidance, a support
Not treacherous, to the mind's *excursive* power.
—So build we up the Being that we are:
Thus deeply drinking in the soul of things,
We shall be wise perforce: and while inspired
By choice, and conscious that the Will is free;
Unswerving shall we move, as if impelled
By strict necessity, along the path
Of order and of good. Whate'er we see
Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine,
Shall fix in calmer seats of moral strength
Earthly desires, and raise to loftier heights
Of love divine, our intellectual soul.

—*The Excursion. Book IV.*

III.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
And Souls of lonely places! can I think

A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
Such ministry, when ye, through many a year
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
Impressed, upon all forms, the characters
Of danger or desire; and thus did make
The surface of the universal earth,
With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
Work like a sea?

—*The Prelude. Book I.*

IV.

On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love and Hope,
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessed consolations in distress;
Of moral strength and intellectual Power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all—
I sing:—"fit audience let me find through few!"
. . . Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
My haunt and the main region of my song.
—Beauty—a living Presence of the earth
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;

Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
. . . I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation:—and by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely too—
Theme this but little heard of among men—
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish:—this is our high argument.
  Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of maddening passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities; may these sounds
Have their authentic comment—that, even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!
  Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspirest
The human Soul of universal earth,
Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets: upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight; that my song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
Shedding benignant influence, and secure,
Itself from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway

Throughout the nether sphere! And if with this
I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating; and who, and what he was,
The transitory being that beheld
This vision; when and where, and how he lived;
Be not this labour useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then,—dread Power,
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illumination,—may my life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners;—nurse
My heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
Be with me;—so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!

—*The Recluse.*

V.

HERE might I pause and bend in reverence
To Nature, and the power of human minds,
To men as they are men within themselves.
How oft high service is performed within
When all the external man is rude in show,—
Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
But a mere mountain chapel, that protects
Its simple worshippers from sun and shower.
Of these, said I, shall be my song,
. . . My theme
No other than the very heart of man,
As found among the best of those who live—
Not unexalted by religious faith,
Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few,—
In Nature's presence: thence may I select
Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight;
And miserable love, that is not pain
To hear of, for the glory that redounds
Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.

—*The Prelude. Book XIII.*

VI.

THE hemisphere
Of magic fiction, verse of mine perchance
May never tread; but scarcely Spenser's self
Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,
Or could more bright appearances create
Of human forms.

—*The Prelude, Book VI.*

VII.

THUS from a very early age
My thoughts by slow gradations had been drawn
To human kind, and to the good and ill
Of human life: Nature had led me on.
—*The Prelude. Book VIII.*

VIII.

FIRST PERCEPTION OF WORDSWORTH'S MISSION.

. . . I HAD passed
The night in dancing, gaiety, and mirth. . . Ere we retired
The cock had crowed, and now the eastern sky
Was kindling, not unseen, from humble copse
And open field, through which the pathway wound,
And homeward led my steps. Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld,—in front
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields.
. . To the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
In thankful blessedness which yet survives.
—*The Prelude. Book IV.*

IX.

WHAT want we? Have we not perpetual streams,
Warm woods and sunny hills, and fresh green fields,
And mountains not less green, and flocks and herds,
And thickets full of songsters, and the voice
Of lordly birds, and unexpected sound
Heard now and then from morn to latest eve.

Admonishing the man who walks below
Of solitude and silence in the sky?
These have we, and a thousand nooks of earth
Have also these, but nowhere else is found,
Nowhere (or is it fancy?) can be found
The one sensation that is here; 'tis here,
Here as it found its way into my heart
In childhood, here as it abides by day,
By night, here only; or in chosen minds
That take it with them hence, where'er they go.
—'Tis, but I cannot name it—'tis the sense
Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,
A blended holiness of earth and sky,
Something that makes this individual spot,
A termination and a last retreat,
A centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
A whole without dependence or defect,
Made for itself and happy in itself,
Perfect contentment, Unity entire.

—*The Recluse.*

X.

(I HAVE)
Sate among the woods
Alone upon some jutting eminence,
At the first gleam of dawn-light, when the Vale,
Yet slumbering, lay in utter solitude.
How shall I seek the origin? where find
Faith in the marvellous things which then I felt?
Oft in these moments such a holy calm
Would overspread my soul, that bodily eyes
Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw
Appeared like something in myself—a dream,
A prospect in the mind.

—*Prelude. Book II.*

. . . . .

OF that external scene which round me lay
Little, in this abstraction, did I see;
Remembered less; but I had inward hopes
And swellings of the spirit; was rapt and soothed;
Conversed with promises, had glimmering views
How life pervades the undecaying mind;
How the immortal soul with God-like power
Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep

That time can lay upon her; how on earth,
Man, if he do but live within the light
Of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad
His being, armed with strength that cannot fail.
—*The Prelude. Book IV.*

XI.

. . . (I) WOULD speak
Of that interminable building reared
By observation of affinities
In objects where no brotherhood exists
To passive minds. . .
To inorganic natures were transferred
My own enjoyments; or the power of truth
Coming in revelation, did converse
With things that really are; I, at this time,
Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
Thus, while the days flew by, and years passed on,
From Nature and her overflowing soul
I had received so much, that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiments of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart.
—*The Prelude. Book II.*

XII.

I FELT
What independent solaces were mine,
To mitigate the injurious sway of place
Or circumstance. . .
As if awakened, summoned, roused, constrained,
I looked for universal things; perused
The common countenance of earth and sky:
Earth nowhere unembellished by some trace
Of that first Paradise whence man was driven;
And sky, whose beauty and bounty are expressed
By the proud name she bears—the name of Heaven.
I called on both to teach me what they might;
Or turning the mind in upon herself,
Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread my thoughts,
. . . Felt
Incumbencies more awful, visitings

Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
That tolerates the indignities of Time,
And from the centre of Eternity
All finite motions overruling, lives
In glory immutable.
. . . I was mounting now
To such community with highest truth . . .
To every natural form, rock, fruits, or flower,
Even the loose stones that cover the high-way
I gave a moral life; I saw them feel
Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love
Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
From transitory passion, unto this
I was as sensitive as waters are
To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
Of passion: was obedient as a lute
That waits upon the touches of the wind.
Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most rich—
I had a world about me—'twas my own;
I made it, for it only lived to me,
And to the God who sees into the heart.
—*The Prelude. Book III.*

XIII.

CALL ye these appearances—
Which I beheld of shepherds in my youth,
This sanctity of nature given to man—
A shadow, a delusion, ye who pore
On the dead letter, miss the spirit of things;
Whose truth is not a motion or a shape
Instinct with vital functions, but a block
Or waxen image which yourselves have made,
And ye adore!
—*The Prelude. Book VIII.*

XIV.

WERE I grossly destitute of all
Those human sentiments that make this earth
So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice
To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born.

If in my youth I have been pure of heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing—
The gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations; and in thee
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion.

—*The Prelude. Book II.*

XV.

WHAT we have loved,
Others will love, and we will teach them how;
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this frame of things
(Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of quality and fabric more divine.

—*The Prelude. Book XIV.*

THE LUCY POEMS.

WRITTEN IN GERMANY.

I.

STRANGE fits of passion have I known;
And I will dare to tell,
But in the lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved was strong and gay,
And like a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath the evening moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye
All over the wide lea;
My horse trudged on, and we drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard plot;
  And as we climbed the hill,
Towards the roof of Lucy's cot
  The moon descended still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
  Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
  On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
  He raised and never stopped;
When down behind the cottage roof
  At once the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
  Into a lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
  "If Lucy should be dead!"

1799.

II.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
  Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise
  And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
  Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
  Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
  When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
  The difference to me!

1799.

III.

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
  In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
  What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
  Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
  To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine is too the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

1799.

IV.

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown:
This child I to myself will take:
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn,
That, wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs:
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute, insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
E'en in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell:
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

1799.

V.

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks and stones and trees.

1799.

SOME POEMS RELATING TO MRS. WORDSWORTH.

I.

A FAREWELL.

COMPOSED IN THE YEAR 1802, BEFORE THE MARRIAGE OF WORDSWORTH.

FAREWELL, thou little nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell! we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And there will safely ride when we are gone:
The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door
Will prosper, though untended and alone.
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none:
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon;
Here are they in our sight—we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell!
For two months now in vain we shall be sought;
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell!
Whom from the borders of the lake we brought
And placed together, near our rocky well.

We go for one to whom ye will be dear;
And she will prize this bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, building without peer!
A gentle maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gatherèd
With joyousness and with a thoughtful cheer
Will come to you, to you herself will wed,
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear spot! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness registered and known;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant yet most fickle place,
That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show
To them who look not daily on thy face;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And sayest, when we forsake thee, "Let them go!"
Thou easy-hearted thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best;
Joy will be flown in its mortality;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glittered at evening like a starry sky;
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sang one song that will not die.

O happy garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

1802.

II.

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT."

SHE was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament.
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn—
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.

1804.

III.

THEREAFTER came
One. . .
She came, no more a phantom to adorn
A moment, but an inmate of the heart,
And yet a spirit, there for me enshrined
To penetrate the lofty and the low;
Even as one essence of pervading light
Shines, in the brightest of ten thousand stars.

—*The Prelude. Book XIV.*

IV.

BY her exulting outside look of youth
And placid under-countenance, first endeared;
That other spirit, Coleridge! who is now
So near to us, that meek confiding heart,
So reverenced by us both.

—*The Prelude. Book VI.*

V.

O DEARER far than light and life are dear,
Full oft our human foresight I deplore;
Trembling, through my unworthiness, with fear
That friends, by death disjoined, may meet no more!

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,
Mix with the day and cross the hour of rest;
While all the future, for thy purer soul,
With "sober certainities" of love is blest.

If a faint sigh, not meant for human ear,
Tell that these words thy humbleness offend,
Cherish me still—else faltering in the rear
Of a steep march, uphold me to the end.

Peace settles where the intellect is meek,
And love is dutiful in thought and deed;
Through thee communion with that love I seek;
The faith Heaven strengthens where *he* moulds the creed.

1824.

SOME POEMS RELATING TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

[*See also* "*Tintern Abbey.*"]

I.

CHOICE OF THE HOME AT GRASMERE.

CAN the choice mislead,
That made the calmest, fairest spot of earth
With all its unappropriated good
My own; and not mine only, for with me
Entrenched, say rather peacefully embowered
Under yon orchard, in yon humble cot,
A younger Orphan of a home extinct,
The only daughter of my Parents dwells.

. . . . .

Stern was the face of Nature: we rejoiced
In that stern countenance, for our souls thence drew
A feeling of their strength. The naked trees,
The icy brooks, as on we passed, appeared
To question us. "Whence come ye, to what end?"
They seemed to say. "What would ye," said the shower,
"Wild wanderers, whither through my dark domain?"
The sunbeam said "Be happy." When this vale
We entered, bright and solemn was the sky
That faced us with a passionate welcoming,
And led us to our threshold.

—*The Recluse.*

II.

MINE eyes did ne'er
Fix on a lovely object, nor my mind
Take pleasure in the midst of happy thoughts
But either She, who now I have, who now
Divides with me this loved abode, was there
Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps turned,

Her voice was like a hidden Bird that sang,
The thought of her was like a flash of light,
Or an unseen companionship, a breath
Of fragrance independent of the wind.
—*The Recluse.*

III.

CHILD of my parents! Sister of my soul!
Thanks in sincerest verse have been elsewhere
Poured out for all the early tenderness
Which I from thee imbibed: and 'tis most true
That later seasons owed to thee no less.
For spite of thy sweet influence
. . . I too exclusively esteemed *that* love
And sought *that* beauty, which, as Milton sings,
Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down
This oversternness, but for thee, dear friend,
My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had stood
In her original self too confident,
Retained too long a countenance severe;
A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds
Familiar, and a favourite of the stars:
But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
And teach the little birds to build their nests
And warble in its chambers. At a time
When Nature, destined to remain so long
Foremost in my affections, had fallen back
Into a second place, pleased to become
A handmaid to a nobler than herself,
When every day brought with it some new sense
Of exquisite regard for common things,
And all the earth was budding with these gifts
Of more refined humanity, thy breath,
Dear Sister! was a kind of gentle Spring
That went before my steps.
—*The Prelude. Book XIV.*

IV.

(*From "The Sparrow's Nest."*)

THE blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears:
A heart the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy. 1801.

V.

I WAS blest
Between these sundry wanderings with a joy
Above all joys, that seemed another morn
Risen on midnoon; blest with the presence, friend,
Of that sole sister, her who hath been long
Dear to thee also, thy true friend and mine,
Now after separation desolate
Restored to me—such absence that she seemed
A gift then first bestowed.
. . . Side by side—we looked forth
And gathered with one mind a rich reward
From the far stretching landscape, by the light
Of morning beautified, or purple eve.
—*The Prelude. Book VI.*

VI.

SUCH thralldom of the sense
Seems hard to shun. And yet I knew a maid,
A young enthusiast who escaped these bonds; . . .
Birds in the bower, and lambs in the green field,
Could they have known her, would have loved;
methought
Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,
The flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills
And everything she looked on should have had
An intimation how she bore herself
Towards them and to all creatures,—God delights
In such a being; for her common thoughts
Are piety, her life is gratitude.
—*The Prelude. Book XII.*

VII.

TO MY SISTER.

IT is the first mild day of March:
Each minute sweeter than before,
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you; and pray
Put on with speed your woodland dress;
And bring no book; for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar:
We from to-day, my friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey;
We for the year to come will take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls:
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my sister! come, I pray
With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book; for this one day
We'll give to idleness. 1798.

VIII.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

STAY near me; do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!

Float near me; do not yet depart!
  Dead times revive in thee.
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart—
  My father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!

1802.

IX.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

I'VE watched you now a full half hour
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!—not frozen seas
  More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
  And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my sister's flowers.
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us; fear no wrong;
  Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song;
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
  As twenty days are now.

1802.

X.

NUTTING.

IT seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope
I left our cottage threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting-crook in hand: and turn'd my steps
Towards some far distant wood, a figure quaint,
Trick'd out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds

Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal dame—
Motley accoutrement; of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and in truth,
More ragged than need was! O'er pathless rocks,
Through beds of matted fern and tangled thickets,
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Droop'd with its wither'd leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation, but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
A virgin scene! A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet;—or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I play'd;
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been bless'd
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons reappear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
Forever;—and I saw the sparkling foam,
And—with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, beneath the shady trees,
Lay round me, scatter'd like a flock of sheep—
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragg'd to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage; and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and moss bower,
Deform'd and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being; and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past,
Even then, when from the bower I turn'd away
Exulting rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees and the intruding sky.
Then, dearest maiden! move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods. 1799.

LINES.

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE.

["No poem of mine," says Wordsworth, "was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it after leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with my sister."]

FIVE years have pass'd; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain springs
With a soft inland murmur.*—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard tufts
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms
Green to the very door: and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremember'd pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremember'd acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight,
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lightened;—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wand'rer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe,
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mórn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create,
And what perceive; well-pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me, here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou, my dearest friend,
My dear, dear friend, and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear sister! And this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her: 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed

With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstacies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence, wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of nature, hither came.
Unwearied in that service; rather say
With warmer love,—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake.

1798.

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY.

(*From Recollections of Early Childhood*).

I.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;



"THIS SWEET MAY MORNING."—*Page* 225.

Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong.
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng;
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday.
Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy shepherd boy!

IV.

Ye blessed creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh, evil day! if I were sullen
While the earth itself is adorning
This sweet May morning,

And the children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers, while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm!
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone;
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII.

Behold the child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pygmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly learnèd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral,
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song;
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage".
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage; thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted forever by the eternal mind—
Mighty prophet! seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,

Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX.

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction—not, indeed,
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised;
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X.

Then sing, ye birds! sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind,
In the primal sympathy
Which, having been, must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI.

And O, ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,
Think not of any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

1803-1806.

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY.

HAD this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent,
Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment;
But 'tis endued with power to stay,
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see—
What is?—ah no, but what *can* be!
Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove;
Or, crowning, star-like, each some sovereign height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both. Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimer transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam
The shadow—and the peace supreme!

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues,
Whate'er it strikes, with gem-like hues!
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side;
And glistening antlers are descried;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine!
—From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread.

And, if there be whom broken ties
Afflict, or injuries assail,
Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop—no record hath told where!
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend!
—Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heavenward raise
Their practicable way.
Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound!
And if some traveller, weary of his road,
Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
And wake him with such gentle heed
As may attune his soul to meet the dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour!

Such hues from their celestial urn
Were wont to stream before mine eye,
Where'er it wandered in the morn
Of blissful infancy.
This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
For, if a vestige of those gleams
Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
Dread Power! whom peace and calmness serve
No less than Nature's threatening voice,
If aught unworthy be my choice,
From THEE if I would swerve;
Oh! let thy grace remind me of the light
Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
Appears to shine, by miracle restored;
My soul, though yet confined to earth,
Rejoices in a second birth!
—'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;
And Night approaches with her shades.

1818.

FROM THE EXCURSION.

I.

DESCRIPTION OF MIST OPENING IN THE HILLS.

WITH their freight homeward the shepherds moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far sinking into splendour—without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes and silver spires:
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
With battlements, that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
And mountain steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky!
Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight!
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks, and emerald turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapp'd.
Right in the midst, where interspace appear'd
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state
Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld

In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power,
For admiration and mysterious awe.
This little vale, a dwelling-place of man,
Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—
I saw not, but I felt, that it was there.
That which I saw was the revealed abode
Of spirits in beatitude: my heart
Swelled in my breast. "I HAVE BEEN DEAD," I cried,
"And now I live! Oh! wherefore do I live?"
—*Book II.*

II.

THE SOUL'S PERCEPTION.

I HAVE seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore and worship, when you know it not;
Pious beyond the intention of your thought,
Devout above the meaning of your will.
Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
The estate of man would be indeed forlorn,
If false conclusions of the reasoning power
Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
Through which the ear converses with the heart.
Has not the soul, the being of your life,
Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
At night's approach bring down the unclouded sky
To rest upon their circumambient walls;
A temple framing of dimensions vast,
And yet not too enormous for the sound

Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal! What if these
Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here—if the solemn nightingale be mute,
And the soft woodlark here did never chant
Her vespers—Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams; and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark-blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above all power of sight—
An iron knell! with echoes from afar,
Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire; yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered!

—*Book IV.*

III.

POWER OF THE SOUL.

WITHIN the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal, that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns like an unconsuming fire of light
In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene. Like power abides
In man's celestial spirit.

—*Book IV.*

STRAY LINES FROM THE EXCURSION.

The vision and the faculty divine,
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse.
—*Book I.*

The imperfect offices of prayer and praise.
—*Book I.*

The mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton.
—*Book I.*

The good die first
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket.
—*Book I.*

This dull product of a scoffer's pen.
—*Book II.*

Wisdom is ofttimes nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar.
—*Book III.*

The intellectual power, through words and things
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way.
—*Book III.*

The most difficult of tasks to keep
Heights which the soul is competent to gain.
—*Book IV.*

Persuasion and belief
Had ripened into faith, and faith become
A passionate intuition.
—*Book IV.*

These imaginative heights, that yield
Far-stretching views into Eternity.
—*Book IV.*

Ah! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
Could field or grove, could any spot of earth,
Show to his eye an image of the pangs
Which it hath witnessed,—render back an echo
Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod.
—*Book VI.*

Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.
—*Book VII.*

A man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
And confident to-morrows.
—*Book VII.*

Not for these sad issues was man created; but to obey
the law
Of life and hope and action.
—*Book IX.*

The Being moves
In beauty through the world.
—*Book IX.*

In what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things
Caught in their fairest, happiest attitude.
—*Book IX.*

The primal duties shine aloft like stars;
The charities that soothe and heal and bless
Are scattered at the feet of Man like flowers.
—*Book IX.*

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

WHO is the happy warrior? Who is he
Whom every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with pain,
And fear, and bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;

Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives;
By objects which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all;
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
—He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a soul whose master bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart: and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;

More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
'Tis, finally, the man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a nation's eye,
Or left unthought of in obscurity—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one,
Where what he most doth value must be won;
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead, unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy warrior; this is he
Whom every man in arms should wish to be.

1806.

ODE TO DUTY.

STERN daughter of the voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe,
From vain temptations dost set free,
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts, without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work and know it not:
Long may the kindly impulse last!
But thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand fast!

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed,
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried—
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide—
Too blindly have reposed my trust;
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance desires;
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face;
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds;
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour:
Oh! let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give:
And, in the light of truth, thy bondman let me live!

1805.

ELEGIAC STANZAS.

[Suggested by a picture of Peele Castle in a storm, painted by Sir George Beaumont.]

(*Written after the death of Wordsworth's brother by drowning.*)

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee,
I saw thee every day: and all the while
Thy form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day
Whene'er I look'd, thy image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! It seemed no sleep,
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle things.

Ah! *then* if mine had been the painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary pile
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss:

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years: a chronicle of heaven;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife:
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such picture would I at that time have made;
And seen the soul of truth in every part;
A faith, a trust, that could not be betrayed.

So once it would have been—'tis so no more;
I have submitted to a new control;
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanised my soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, friend! who would have been
the friend,
If he had lived, of him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend,
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh, 'tis a passionate work!—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

1805.

LINES.

[Composed at Grasmere, during a walk one evening, after a stormy day, the author having just read in a newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.]

LOUD is the Vale!—the voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone,
A mighty unison of streams!
Of all her voices, one!

Loud is the Vale!—this inland depth
In peace is roaring like the sea:
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain depresst,
Importunate and heavy load!
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road;

And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

A power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss;
And when the mighty pass away,
What is it more than this—

That man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be;
Then wherefore should we mourn?

1806

SELECTIONS FROM THE SONNETS.

I.

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

1827.

II.

GREAT men have been among us; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom, better none:
The later Sydney, Marvel, Harington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend,
These moralists could act and comprehend:
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour: what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of books and men!

1802.

III.

IT is not to be thought of that the flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed "with pomp of waters unwithstood"—
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish, and to evil and to good
Be lost forever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake—the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

1802.

IV.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802.

FAIR star of evening, splendour of the West,
Star of my country! on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the nations. Thou, I think,
Shouldst be my country's emblem; and shouldst wink,
Bright star! with laughter on her banners, drest

In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, it is England; there it lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory! I, with many a fear
For my dear country, many heart-felt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

1802.

V.

SEPTEMBER, 1802.

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France—the coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk, for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity,
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul
Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

1802.

VI.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest
To think that now our life is only drest
For show: mean handiwork of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now, in nature or in book,
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

1802.

VII.

LONDON, 1802.

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour;
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

1802.

VIII.

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou shouldst wean
Thy heart from its emasculating food;
The truth should now be better understood:
Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, thou wouldst step between.
England! all nations in this charge agree;
But worse, more ignorant in love or hate,
Far—far more abject is thine Enemy:
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
Oh, grief! that earth's best hopes rest all with thee.

1803.

IX.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

TWO voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains, each a mighty voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a tyrant, and with holy glee

Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from the Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft;
Then cleave, oh cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful voice be heard by thee!

1807.

X.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
Oh, miserable chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee: thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

1802.

XI.

TO B. R. HAYDON.

HIGH is our calling, friend! creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness:—
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

1815.

XII.

THE world is too much with us : late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything we are out of tune ;
It moves us not. Great God ! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn,
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow its wreathèd horn.

1806.

XIII.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning : silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

1802.

XIV.

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free ;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea :
Listen ! the mighty being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Dear child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature therefore is not less divine:
Thou liest "in Abraham's bosom" all the year;
And worshipp'st at the temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

1802.

XV.

THE shepherd, looking eastward, softly said
"Bright is thy veil, O moon, as thou art bright!"
Forthwith, that little cloud, in ether spread,
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and showed her fulgent head
Uncovered; dazzling the beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right;
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparagèd.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went floating from her, darkening as it went;
And a huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured—content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

1815.

XVI.

TO THE SUPREME BEING.

(*From Michael Angelo.*)

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
Which quickens only where Thou say'st it may,
Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way,
No man can find it: Father! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
And sound Thy praises everlastingly.

1804.



"THE SHEPHERD, LOOKING EASTWARD, SOFTLY SAID,
'BRIGHT IS THY VEIL, O MOON, AS THOU ART BRIGHT!' "—*Page* 248.

XVII.

MOST sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse.
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

1833.

XVIII.

WHERE lies the land to which yon ship must go?
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
As vigorous as a lark at break of day.
Is she for tropic suns or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry? Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare
(From time to time, like pilgrims here and there
Crossing the waters), doubt, and something dark,
Of the old sea some reverential fear
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous bark!

1806.

XIX.

HER only pilot the soft breeze, the boat
Lingers, but Fancy is well satisfied;
With keen-eyed Hope, with Memory, at her side.
And the glad Muse at liberty to note
All that to each is precious, as we float
Gently along; regardless who shall chide
If the heavens smile, and leave us free to glide,
Happy Associates breathing air remote
From trivial cares. But, Fancy and the Muse,
Why have I crowded this small bark with you

And others of your kind, ideal crew!
While here sits One, whose brightness owes its hues
To flesh and blood; no Goddess from above,
No fleeting Spirit, but my own true Love?

1827.

XX.

TO SLEEP.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky,
By turns have all been thought of, yet I lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep, by any stealth.
So do not let me wear to-night away.
Without thee, what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

1806.

XXI.

"I WATCH, AND LONG HAVE WATCHED."

I WATCH, and long have watched, with calm regret
Yon slowly sinking star—immortal sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering quire!
Blue ether still surrounds him—yet and yet;
But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns—transmuted to a dusky fire—
Then pays submissively the appointed debt
To the flying moments, and is seen no more.
Angels and gods! We struggle with our fate,
While health, power, glory, from their height decline,
Depressed; and then extinguished; and our state
In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore!

1819.

XXII.

MUTABILITY.

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

1821–22.

XXIII.

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE.

TAX not the royal saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the architect who planned,
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed scholars only, this immense
And glorious work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more.
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering, and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

XXIV.

THE SAME.

WHAT awful perspective! while from our sight
With gradual stealth the lateral windows hide
Their portraitures, their stone-work glimmers, dyed
In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light,

Martyr or King, or sainted Eremite,
Whoe'er ye be, that thus, yourselves unseen,
Inbue your prison bars with solemn sheen,
Shine on, until ye fade with coming night!
But from the arms of silence—list O! list
The music bursteth into second life;
The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
By sound or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;
Heart-thrilling strains, that cast before the eye
Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy!

XXV.

THE SAME.

THEY dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam:
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my path
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
As now, when She hath also seen her breast
Filled with mementoes, satiate with its part
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

1821–1822.

XXVI.

AFTER-THOUGHT.

I THOUGHT of thee, my partner and my guide,
As being passed away. Vain sympathies!
For backward, Duddon, as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the stream, and shall not cease to glide;
The form remains, the function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish. Be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live and act and serve the future hour;

And if, as towards the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know!

1820.

XXVII.

THE TROSSACHS.

THERE'S not a nook within this solemn pass,
But were an apt confessional for one
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice-happy guest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

1831.

XXVIII.

HIGHLAND HUT.

SEE what gay wild-flowers deck this earth-built cot,
Whose smoke, forth issuing whence and how it may,
Shines in the greeting of the sun's first ray
Like wreaths of vapour without stain or blot.
The limpid mountain rill avoids it not,
And why shouldst thou? If rightly trained and bred,
Humanity is humble, finds no spot
Which her Heaven-guided feet refuse to tread.
The walls are cracked, sunk is the flowery roof,
Undressed the pathway leading to the door.
But love, as Nature loves, the lonely poor!
Search, for their worth, some gentle heart wrong-proof,
Meek, patient, kind, and, were its trials fewer,
Belike less happy. Stand no more aloof!

1831.

XXIX.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD FOR NAPLES.

A TROUBLE, not of clouds or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height.
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean and the midland sea,
Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope!

1831.

WRITTEN IN MARCH.

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF BROTHER'S-WATER.

THE cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated.
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The ploughboy is whooping—anon—anon

There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

1802.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

I HEARD a thousand blended notes
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts in that sweet bower
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played;
Their thoughts I cannot measure;
But the least motion that they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

From heaven if this belief be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

1798.

FROM ODE TO LYCORIS.

IN youth we love the darksome lawn
Brushed by the owlet's wing;
Then twilight is preferred to dawn,
And autumn to the spring.

Sad fancies do we then affect,
In luxury of disrespect
To our own prodigal excess
Of too familiar happiness.
Lycoris (if such name befit
Thee, thee my life's celestial sign!)
When Nature marks the year's decline,
Be ours to welcome it;
Pleased with the harvest hope that runs
Before the path of milder suns;
Pleased while the sylvan world displays
Its ripeness to the feeding gaze;
Pleased when the sullen winds resound the knell
Of the resplendent miracle.

But something whispers to my heart
That, as we downward tend,
Lycoris, life requires an *art*
To which our souls must bend;
A skill to balance and supply;
And, ere the flowing fount be dry,
As soon it must, a sense to sip
Or drink with no fastidious lip.
Then welcome, above all, the guest
Whose smiles diffused o'er land and sea,
Seem to recall the deity
Of youth into the breast:
May pensive autumn ne'er present
A claim to her disparagement!
While blossoms and the budding spray
Inspire us in our own decay,
Still, as we nearer draw to life's dark goal,
Be hopeful spring the favourite of the soul!

1817.

YEW-TREES.

THERE is a yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore,
Not loath to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.

Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary tree!—a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane. A pillared shade
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight, Death the Skeleton,
And Time the Shadow; there to celebrate.
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

1803.

AIREY FORCE VALLEY.

. . . NOT a breath of air
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.
From the brook's margin, wide around, the trees
Are steadfast as the rocks; the brook itself,
Old as the hills that feed it from afar,
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
Where all things else are calm and motionless.
And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance
Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt,
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the brow
Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-moving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his thoughts.

1842.

THE ECHO.

YES! yes! it was the mountain echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound.

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry.
Like—but, oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal life?
Hear not we, unthinking creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife—
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too?—Yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar—
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God,—of God they are!

1806.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE DOVE.

O NIGHTINGALE! thou surely art
A creature of a "fiery heart";
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce:
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the god of wine
Had helped thee to a valentine—
A song in mockery, and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night,
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.
I heard a stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze;
He did not cease; but cooed—and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:

He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the song, the song for me!

1807.

TO THE CUCKOO.

O BLITHE new-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice:
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice?

While I am lying on the grass,
Thy loud note smites my ear!
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near!

I hear thee babbling to the vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers;
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing;
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for thee!

1804.

TO A SKYLARK.

Up with me! up with me, into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me, into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me, high and high,
To thy banqueting-place in the sky!

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou wouldst be loath
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

1805.

TO THE SKYLARK.

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond
  Mount, daring warbler!—that love-prompted strain
—Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond—
  Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
  A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
  Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

1826.

THE GREEN LINNET.

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
  Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And flowers and birds once more to greet,
  My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to thee, far above the rest
  In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May,
  And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
  Art sole in thy employment;
A life, a presence like the air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with anyone to pair;
  Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle in the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A brother of the dancing leaves,
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

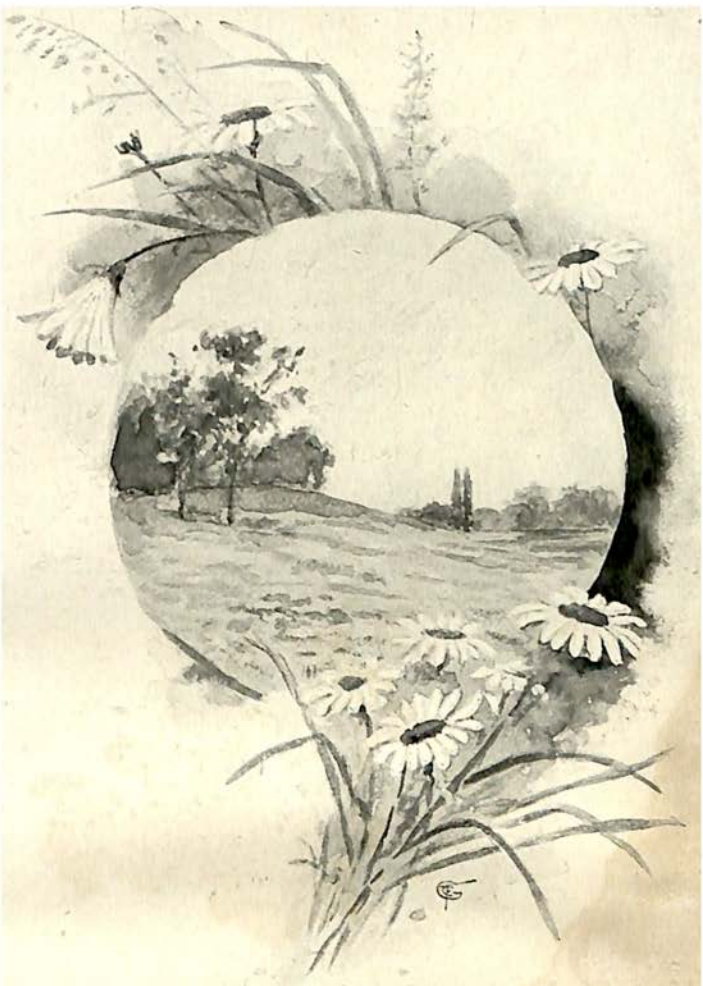
1803.

TO THE DAISY.

In youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill, in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
Most pleased when most uneasy;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly nature's love partake,
Of thee, sweet Daisy!

Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few grey hairs;
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
That she may sun thee;
Whole Summer-fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane:
Pleased at his greeting thee again;
Yet nothing daunted,
Nor grieved if thou be set at naught:
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted.



"THOU ART INDEED, BY MANY A CLAIM,
THE POET'S DARLING."—*Page* 263.

Be violets in their secret mews
The flowers the wanton zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
Her head impearling:
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame;
Thou art indeed, by many a claim,
The poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He need but look about, and there
Thou art!—a friend at hand, to scare
His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy, wrong or right,
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to thee should turn,
I drink, out of an humbler urn,
A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

When, smitten by the morning ray,
I see thee rise, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful flower! my spirits play
With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk by dews opprest,
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing:
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how nor whence,
Nor whither going:

Child of the year! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course, when day's begun,
As ready to salute the sun
As lark or leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men,
Than in old time:—thou not in vain
Art nature's favourite.* 1802.

SO FAIR, SO SWEET.

So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive,
Would that the little flowers were born to live
Conscious of half the pleasure that they give;

That to this mountain daisy's self were known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked stone!

And what if hence a bold desire should mount
High as the Sun, that he could take account
Of all that issues from his glorious fount!

So might he ken how by his sovereign aid
These delicate companionships are made;
And how he rules the pomp of light and shade;

And where the Sister-power that shines by night
So privileged, what a countenance of delight
Would through the clouds break forth on human sight!

Fond fancies! wheresoe'er shall turn thine eye
On earth, air, ocean or the starry sky,
Converse with Nature in pure sympathy;

All vain desires, all lawless wishes quelled,
Be Thou to love and praise alike impelled,
Whatever boon is granted or withheld. 1845.

* See in Chaucer and the elder poets the honours formerly paid to this flower.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE.*

PANSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies:
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
  Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
  They will have a place in story;
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
  Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as they, I trow,
  Since the day I found thee out,
Little flower;—I'll make a stir
Like a sage astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met
  I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
  'Twas a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about its nest,
  Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
  Like a careless prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude;
Never heed them; I aver
  That they all are wanton wooers;
But the thrifty cottager,
  Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home:
Spring is coming—thou art come!

* Common pilewort.

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming spirit!
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
  Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
  In the lane;—there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups, that will be seen,
  Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
  They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth;
Herald of a mighty band,
  Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
  Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

1802.

TO THE SAME FLOWER.

PLEASURES newly found are sweet
When they lie about our feet:
February last, my heart
  First at sight of thee was glad;
All unheard of as thou art,
  Thou must needs, I think, have had
Celandine! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.

. . . .

Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
  Sticking kerchief-pots of mould
All about with full-blown flowers,
  Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold!
With the proudest thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sighed to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,
Sighed to think I read a book
Only read, perhaps, by me;
Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise.

Blithe of heart, from week to week
Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
While the patient primrose sits
Like a beggar in the cold,
Thou, a flower of wiser wits,
Slipp'st into thy sheltering hold;
Liveliest of the vernal train
When ye all are out again.

1802.

DAFFODILS.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee.
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed, but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

1804.

SOME BALLADS, NARRATIVES, AND PASTORALS.

I.

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE.

Upon the Restoration of Lord Clifford, the Shepherd, to the Estates and Honours of his Ancestors.

HIGH in the breathless hall the minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the song.—
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long:—

"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.—
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how she smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!

"They came with banner, spear, and shield,
And it was proved in Bosworth field.
Not long the avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the land hath uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful North:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;

Our strong abodes and castles see
The glory of their royalty.
How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though lonely, a deserted tower!
Knight, squire or yoeman, page or groom;
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her!—she shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely tower:—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair house by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer—
To see her master and to cheer
Him, and his lady-mother dear!

"Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the mother and the child.
Who will take them from the light?
—Yonder is a man in sight—
Yonder is a house—but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, mother mild,
Maid and mother undefiled,
Save a mother and her child!

"Now who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a shepherd-boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be he who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?

O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her babe did say:
'My own, my own, thy fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!'

"Alas! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.
—Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young bird that is distrest;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

"A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
—Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty;

And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale Tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight,
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;
He hath kenned them taking wing:
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
Face of thing that is to be;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
—Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the lance—
'Bear me to the heart of France'
Is the longing of the shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a reappearing star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed,
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts were poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
The shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

1807.

II.

HART-LEAP WELL.

[Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water about five miles from Richmond, in Yorkshire. Its name is derived from a remarkable chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the Second Part of the following poem.]

THE knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud;
And now, as he approached a vassal's door,
"Bring forth another horse!" he cried aloud.

"Another horse!" that shout the vassal heard,
And saddled his best steed, a comely gray:
Sir Walter mounted him: he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's hall,
That, as they galloped, made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain;
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The knight hallooed, he cheered and chid them on
With suppliant gestures and upraidings stern;
But breath and eyesight fail: and one by one
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
—This chase it looks not like an earthly chase;
Sir Walter and the hart are left alone.

The poor hart toils along the mountain side
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died;
But now the knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a thorn;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy:
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned;
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the hart was lying stretched:
His nose half touched a spring beneath the hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath has fetched,
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot!)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill, (it was at least
Nine roods of sheer ascent,) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted beast
Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by human eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

"I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbour made for rural joy;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

"A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for the fountain in the dell!
And they who do make mention of the same
From this day forth shall call it 'Hart-Leap Well.'

"And, gallant stag! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

"And in the summer-time, when days are long,
I will come hither with my paramour:
And with the dancers, and the minstrel's song,
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

"Till the foundations of the mountains fail,
My mansion with its arbour shall endure:—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure!"

Then home he went, and left the hart, stone dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring,
—Soon did the knight perform what he had said,
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall,
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter journeyed with his paramour;
And with the dancers, and the minstrel's song,
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND.

THE moving accident is not my trade:
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts;
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw, standing in a dell,
Three aspens at three corners of a square;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine:
And, pulling now the rein, my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,
The last stone pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were gray, with neither arms nor head;
Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
"Here in old time the hand of man hath been."

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow. Him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
"A jolly place," said he, "in times of old!
But something ails it now; the spot is curst.

"You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms!

"The arbour does its own condition tell;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream;
But as to the great lodge! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

"There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

"Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood; but, for my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sittting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy hart.

"What thoughts must through the creature's brain have passed!
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds; and look, sir, at this last—
O master! it has been a cruel leap.

"For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

"Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother's side.

"In April here beneath the scented thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

"Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees and stones and fountain, all are gone."

"Gray-headed shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine:
This beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

"The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

"The pleasure-house is dust—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

"She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But, at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

"One lesson, shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows and what conceals—
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

1800.

III.

POWER OF MUSIC.

AN Orpheus! an Orpheus! yes, faith may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old;—
Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same
In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name.

His station is there; and he works on the crowd,
He sways them with harmony merry and loud;
He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim—
Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him?

What an eager assembly! what an empire is this!
The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss;
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have rest;
And the guilt-burthened soul is no longer opprest.

As the moon brightens round her the clouds of the night,
So he, where he stands, is a centre of light;
It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-browed Jack,
And the pale-visaged baker's, with basket on back.

That errand-bound prentice was passing in haste—
What matter? he's caught—and his time runs to waste.
The newsman is stopped, though he stops on the fret;
And the half-breathless lamplighter—he's in the net!

The porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
The lass with her barrow wheels hither her store;
If a thief could be here, he might pilfer at ease;
She sees the musician, 'tis all that she sees!

He stands, backed by the wall; he abates not his din;
His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in
From the old and the young, from the poorest; and there!
The one-pennied boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the hearers, and proud be the hand
Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a band;
I am glad for him, blind as he is!—all the while
If they speak 'tis to praise, and they praise with a smile.

That tall man, a giant in bulk and in height,
Not an inch of his body is free from delight;
Can he keep himself still, if he would? oh, not he!
The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

Mark that cripple who leans on his crutch; like a tower
That long has leaned forward, leans hour after hour!
That mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,
While she dandles the babe in her arms to the sound.

Now, coaches and chariots! roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream:
They are deaf to your murmurs—they care not for you,
Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye pursue!

1806.

IV.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE.

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily, and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the stock-dove broods;
The jay makes answer as the magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

I was a traveller then upon the moor,
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
  Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
  In our dejection do we sink as low;
  To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor
    could name.

I heard the skylark warbling in the sky;
  And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy child of earth am I;
  Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
  Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
  As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
  To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
  But how can he expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
  The sleepless soul that perished in his pride;
Of him who walked in glory and in joy
  Following his plough, along the mountain side:
  By our own spirits are we deified;
We poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
  A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
  When I, with these untoward thoughts had striven,
  Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven,
I saw a man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore gray hairs.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
  Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
  By what means it could thither come, and whence,
  So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

Such seemed this man, not all alive nor dead,
  Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
  Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
  As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

Himself he propped, body, and pale face,
  Upon a long gray staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
  Upon the margin of that moorish flood
  Motionless as a cloud the old man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call
And moveth altogether, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
  Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
  As if he had been reading in a book:
  And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

A gentle answer did the old man make,
  In courteous speech, which forth he slowly drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
  "What occupation do you there pursue?
  This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
  But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
  Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
  Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

He told, that to these waters he had come
  To gather leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
  And he had many hardships to endure:
  From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance,
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

The old man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills,
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old man's shape and speech—all troubled me;
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn, to find
In that decrepit man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure:
I'll think of the leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!"

1802.

V.

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN.

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years;
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird,

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes.

1797.

VI.

WE ARE SEVEN.

A SIMPLE child
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic woodland air,
And she was wildly clad;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we:
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."



"DOWN WHICH SHE SO OFTEN HAS TRIPPED WITH HER PAIL."
—*Page* 282.

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!—I pray you tell,
Sweet maid, how this may be?"

Then did the little maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little maid replied;
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was little Jane;
In bed she moaning lay.
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I.
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little maid's reply,
"O master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away: for still
The little maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

1798.

VII.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS.

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
His face is fair and fresh to see:
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me—and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm;
Kilve, thought I, was a favoured place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And as we talked, I questioned him
In very idleness.

"Now, tell me, had you rather be,"
I said, and took him by the arm,
"On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea
Or here at Liswyn farm?"

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, "At Kilve I'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm."

"Now, little Edward, say why so:
My little Edward, tell me why?"—
"I cannot tell, I do not know."—
"Why, this is strange," said I;

"For here are woods, hills smooth and warm;
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea."

At this my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply;
And three times to the child I said,
"Why, Edward, tell me why?"

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain,—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock;
And thus to me he made reply:
"At Kilve there was no weathercock;
And that's the reason why."

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

1798.

VIII.

LUCY GRAY;

OR, SOLITUDE.

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade, Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon."

At this the father raised his hook
And snapped a faggot band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down:
And many a hill did Lucy climb;
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night,
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet!"
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same:
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
The footmarks one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there was none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child:
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

1799.

IX.

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS.

We walked along, while bright and red,
Uprose the morning sun;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
"The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering gray;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the streaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun;
Then from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?"

A second time did Matthew stop,
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply:

"Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this, which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

"And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

"With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, to the church-yard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter's grave.

Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang: she would have been
A very nightingale.

"Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

"And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the church-yard yew,
A blooming girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew,

"A basket on her head she bare;
Her brow was smooth and white;
To see a child so very fair,
. It was a pure delight!

"No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

"There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I looked at her, and looked again,
And did not wish her mine."

Matthew is in his grave; yet now,
Methinks I see him stand
As at that moment, with his bough
Of wilding in his hand.

1799.

X.

THE FOUNTAIN.

A CONVERSATION.

WE talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true;
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew!" said I, "let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old Border song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;

"Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old man replied,
The gray-haired man of glee:

"No check, no stay, this streamlet fears,
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

"Thus fares it still in our decay;
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

"The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

"With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife: they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

"But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need bemoan,
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own;
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains;
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains;

"And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side,
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's Rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

1799.

XI.

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET.

WHERE art thou, my beloved son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh, find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same,
That I may rest, and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And be for evermore beguiled,
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred, I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold;
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

Ah! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares!

He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress,
But do not make her love the less.

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought; and, being blind,
Said, "Pride shall help me in my wrong:
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed." And that is true;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

My son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh, do not dread thy mother's door!
Think not of me with grief and pain;
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie *us* down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

I look for ghosts; but none will force
Their way to me: 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass.
I question things, and do not find
One that will answer to my mind,
And all the world appears unkind,

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief;
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end:
I have no other earthly friend!

1804.

XII.

MICHAEL.

A PASTORAL POEM.

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But courage! for around that boisterous brook,
The mountains have all opened out themselves
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey hither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is, in truth, an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones;
And to that place a story appertains
Which, though it be ungarnished with events,
Is not unfit, I deem, for the fireside
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men

Whom I already loved—not, verily,
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the south
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm—that drives
The traveller to a shelter—summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists
That came to him and left him on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the shepherd's thoughts.
Fields where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; the hills which he so oft
Had climbed with vigorous steps, which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind

Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain—
Those fields, those hills (what could they less?), had laid
Strong hold on his affections; were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house. Two wheels she had
Of antique form—this large for spinning wool,
That small for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out-of-doors
The son and father were come home, even then
Their labour did not cease; unless when all
Turned to their cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round their basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when their meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)
And his old father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside: perhaps to card
Wool for the housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style

Did with a huge projection overbrow
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the housewife hung a lamp—
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn, and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left the couple neither gay, perhaps,
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
Father and son, while late into the night
The housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the house itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named The Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Blind spirit which is in the blood of all—
Than that a child more than all other gifts
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy. For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love—
Albeit of a stern, unbending mind—
To have the young one in his sight, when he
Had work by his own door, or when he sat
With sheep before him on his shepherd's stool,
Beneath that large old oak which near their door
Stood, and from its enormous breadth of shade
Chosen for the shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The Clipping Tree,* a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scare them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when, by Heaven's good grace, the boy grew up
A healthy lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his father hire of praise;
Though naught was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts, and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were

* Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old man's heart seemed born again!

Thus in his father's sight the boy grew up;
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture—
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had gathered so much strength
That he could look his trouble in the face,
It seemed that his sole refuge was to sell
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him; but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies, and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel: the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;

He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman; he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade; and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
May come again to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where everyone is poor,
What can be gained?" At this the old man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy; at the church-door
They made a gathering for him—shillings, pence,
And half-pennies—wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with peddler's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estate and moneys to the poor,
And, at his birthplace, built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old man was glad,
And thus resumed: "Well, Isabel! this scheme,
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough. I wish, indeed, that I
Were younger: but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
If he *could* go, the boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work; for when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the two last nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep;

And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door: "Thou must not go:
We have no other child but thee to lose,
None to remember. Do not go away;
For if thou leave thy father, he will die."
The youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the boy;
To which requests were added that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old man said:
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked;
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old man spake to him: "My son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part

Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should speak
Of things thou canst not know of. After thou
First camest into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tone;
When thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well as thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old man grasped his hand,
And said: "Nay, do not take it so; I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good father. And herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together. Here they lived
As all their forefathers had done, and when,
At length their time was come, they were not loath
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived.
But 'tis a long time to look back, my son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burdened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled. God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
It looks as if it never could endure
Another master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go." At this the old man paused.
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :
" This was a work for us ; and now, my son,
It is a work for me. But lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, boy, be of good hope ; we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale. Do thou thy part ;
I will do mine. I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee.
Up to the heights and in among the storms
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone
Before I knew thy face. Heaven bless thee, boy !
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes. It should be so. Yes, yes,
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke ; thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love. When thou art gone,
What will be left to us ? But I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone
As I requested ; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my son,
And of this moment ; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee. Amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
Mayst bear in mind the life thy fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well.
When thou returnest, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here—a covenant
'Twill be between us. But whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The shepherd ended here ; and Luke stooped down
And, as his father had requested, laid
The first stone of the sheepfold. At the sight
The old man's grief broke from him ; to his heart
He pressed his son, he kissèd him and wept ;
And to the house together they returned.
Hushed was that house in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell : with morrow's dawn the boy
Began his journey ; and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face ;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,

Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing; and the boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on; and once again
The shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes, when he could find a leisure hour,
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable which else
Would overset the brain or break the heart.
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up towards the sun,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old man; and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the sheepfold, sometimes was he seen,
Sitting alone, with that his faithful dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband. At her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The cottage which was named The Evening Star
Is gone; the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood; yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

1800.

LAODAMIA.

[Written at Rydal Mount. The incident of the trees growing and withering put the subject into my thoughts.]

"WITH sacrifice, before the rising morn
Vows have I made, by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal gods, 'mid shades forlorn,
Of night, my slaughtered lord have I required;
Celestial pity I again implore;—.
Restore him to my sight, great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens and her eye expands,
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows,
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived? O joy!
What doth she look on—whom doth she behold?
Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence—his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis he!
And a God leads him—wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake, and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear: "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamia, that at Jove's command
Thy husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift; behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned queen her lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The phantom parts—but parts to reunite
And reassume his place before her sight.

"Protesilaus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon,—and blessed a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamia, doth not leave
His gifts imperfect:—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive,
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou know'st, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were depressed
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
That thou should'st cheat the malice of the grave;
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

"No spectre greets me,—no vain shadow this:
Come, blooming hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish.—Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful consort, to control
Rebellious passion; for the gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn——"

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love—though oft to agony distressed;
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou goest, I follow——" "Peace!" he said—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled:
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty—melancholy grace—
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, that sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight
While tears were thy best pastime,—day and night;

"And while my youthful peers, before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

"The wished-for wind was given:—I then revolved
The Oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, ofttimes bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved wife;
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains—flowers;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

"But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
'Behold, they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?'—
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blessed reunion in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

"Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
Seeking a higher object:—Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned chiefly for that end:
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled; her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."

Aloud she shrieked—for Hermes reappears!
Round the dear shade she would have clung—'tis vain:
The hours are past,—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way—
And on the palace floor a lifeless corse she lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished, and as for a wilful crime
By the just gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight:
A constant interchange of growth and blight!

1814.

FROM MEMORIALS OF SCOTLAND.

I.

STEPPING WESTWARD.

[While my fellow-traveller, my sister Dorothy, and I were walking by the side of Loch Katrine, one fine evening after sunset, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What, you are stepping westward?"]

"*What, you are stepping westward?*"—"*Yea.*"
'Twould be a *wildish* destiny
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guest of Chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny.
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound
Of something without place or bound,
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake:
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy:
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

1803.

II.

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL.

AT INVERSNAID, UPON LOCH LOMOND.

SWEET Highland girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these grey rocks; this household lawn;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay; a quiet road,
That holds in shelter thy abode—
In truth, together ye do seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
But O fair creature! in the light
Of common say, so heavenly bright,
I bless thee, vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart!
God shield thee to thy latest years!
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness;
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a mountaineer:
A face with gladness overspread!
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech;
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.
What hand but would a garland cull
For thee, who art so beautiful?
Oh, happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;
Adopt your homely ways and dress,
A shepherd, thou a shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder brother I would be,
Thy father,—anything to thee!
Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompence.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our memory, feel that she hath eyes;
Then, why should I be loath to stir?

I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loath, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland girl! from thee to part:
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And thee, the spirit of them all!

1803.

III.

THE SOLITARY REAPER.

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
Oh, listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt
Among Arabian sands:
—A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—

I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

1803.

IV.

GLEN-ALMAIN; OR, THE NARROW GLEN.

In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the "Narrow Glen";
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last,
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent.
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it?—I blame them not
Whose fancy in this lonely spot
Was moved; and in this way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell
Would break the silence of this dell:
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these;
The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
And happy feelings of the dead:
And therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race!
Lies buried in this lonely place.

1803.

V.

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS, 1803.

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH.

(For illustration see "My Sister's Journal.")

I SHIVER, spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold:
As vapours breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid.

And have I, then, thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here
I shrink with pain;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off, weight—nor press on weight! Away
Dark thoughts!—they came, but not to stay;
With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower whose modest worth
He sang, his genius "glinted" forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow,
The struggling heart, where be they now?
Full soon the aspirant of the plough,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave.

I mourned with thousands, but as one
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
More deeply grieved, for he was gone
And showed my youth
How verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends—
Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen:
Neighbours we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined,
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
Thou "poor inhabitant below,"
At this dread moment—even so—
Might we together
Have sat and talked where gowans blow,
Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed
Within my reach; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast!
But why go on?
Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
His grave grass-grown.

There, too, a son, his joy and pride
(Not three weeks past the stripling died),
Lies gathered to his father's side,
Soul-moving sight!
Yet one to which is not denied
Some sad delight:

For *he* is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harboured where none can be misled,
Wronged or distrest;
And surely here it may be said
That such are blest.

And oh for thee, by pitying grace
Checked ofttimes in a devious race,
May He who halloweth the place
Where man is laid
Receive thy spirit in the embrace
For which it prayed!

Sighing, I turned away; but ere
Night fell, I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near—
A ritual hymn,
Chanted in love that casts out fear
By seraphim.

1803.

VI.

THOUGHTS.

SUGGESTED THE DAY FOLLOWING, ON THE BANKS OF NITH, NEAR THE POET'S RESIDENCE.

Too frail to keep the lofty vow
That must have followed when his brow
Was wreathed—"The Vision" tells us how—
With holly spray,
He faltered, drifted to and fro,
And passed away.

Well might such thoughts, dear sister, throng
Our minds when, lingering all too long,
Over the grave of Burns we hung
In social grief—
Indulged as if it were a wrong
To seek relief.

But, leaving each unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam
Of good and fair,
Let us beside this limpid stream
Breathe hopeful air.

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight:
Think rather of those moments bright
When to the consciousness of right
His course was true,
When wisdom prospered in his sight
And virtue grew.

Yes, freely let our hearts expand,
Freely as in youth's season bland,
When side by side, his book in hand,
We wont to stray,
Our pleasure varying at command
Of each sweet lay.

How oft inspired must he have trod
These path-ways, yon far-stretching road!
There lurks his home; in that abode,
With mirth elate,
Or in his nobly pensive mood,
The rustic sate.

Proud thoughts that image overawes,
Before it humbly let us pause,
And ask of Nature from what cause
And by what rules
She trained her Burns to win applause
That shames the schools.

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen:
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when
Bees fill their hives;
Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives.

What need of fields in some far clime
Where heroes, sages, bards sublime,
And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
From genuine springs,
Shall dwell together till old Time
Folds up his wings?

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of heaven
This minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
With vain endeavour,
And memory of earth's bitter leaven
Effaced forever.

But why to him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
With all that live?
The best of what we do and are,
Just God, forgive!

1803.

VII.

YARROW UNVISITED.

(See various poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular the exquisite ballad of Hamilton, beginning—

"Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!")

FROM Stirling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravell'd;
Had trod the banks of Clyde and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travell'd;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"
"What'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow!

"There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryburgh, where with chiming Tweed
The linnwhites sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow;
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
Strange words they seem'd of slight and scorn;
My true love sigh'd for sorrow,
And look'd me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
But we will leave it growing.

O'er hilly path and open strath
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still Saint Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go
To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it;
We have a vision of our own:
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow.

"If care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loath to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

1803.

VIII.

YARROW VISITED.

And is this—Yarrow?—*this* the stream
Of which my fancy cherish'd,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perish'd!
Oh, that some minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontroll'd meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted,
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow Vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness:
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here t' admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding;
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The water-wraith ascended thrice,
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the lay that sings
The haunts of happy lovers,
The path that leads them to the grov
The leafy grove that covers;
And pity sanctifies the verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
  Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
  Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves.
  Behold a ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's towers,
  Renowned in border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
  For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
  And age to wear away in!
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
  A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts that nestle there—
  The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
  The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my true love's forehead plant
  A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own!
  'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober hills thus deck their brows
  To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
  Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of fancy still survives—
  Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever youthful waters keep
  A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
  Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the heights,
  They melt and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
  Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
  Thine genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
  And cheer my mind in sorrow.

1814.

IX.

YARROW REVISITED.

[The following stanzas are a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott, and other friends visiting the banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford for Naples.]

THE gallant youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a "winsome Marrow,"
Was but an infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed,
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation.
No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Brisk youth appeared, the morn of youth,
With freaks of graceful folly—
Life's temperate noon, her sober eve,
Her night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing;

If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps—a sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O Scott! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes,
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorrento's breezy waves;
May classic fancy, linking
With native fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking!

Oh! while they minister to thee,
Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow age
With Strength, her venturous brother;
And Tiber, and each brook and rill
Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
Nor lose one ray of glory!

For thou, upon a hundred streams,
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
Wherever they invite thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
With gladness must requite thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
When first I gazed upon her;

Beheld what I feared to see,
  Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
  The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world, were all
  That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
  Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
  Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
  That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localised romance
  Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
  For fanciful dejections:
Ah no! the visions of the past
  Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is—our changeful life—
  With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, ye, whose thoughts that day
  In Yarrow's groves were centred;
Who through the silent portal arch
  Of mouldering Newark entered;
And clomb the winding stair that once
  Too timidly was mounted
By the "last minstrel" (not the last!)
  Ere he his tale recounted.

Flow on forever, Yarrow stream!
  Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future bards should chant
  For simple hearts thy beauty;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
  Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
  To memory's shadowy moonshine!

1831.

MEMORIES OF DEPARTED FRIENDS.

(*From "Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg."*)

WHEN first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered
Through groves that had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways
My steps the Border-minstrel led.

The mighty minstrel breathes no longer,
Mid mouldering ruins low he lies;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow
Has closed the shepherd-poet's eyes;

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
From sign to sign, its steadfast course,
Since every mortal power of Coleridge
Was frozen at its marvellous source;

The rapt one, of the god-like forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth;
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother
From sunshine to the sunless land!

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber
Were earlier raised, remain to hear
A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
"Who next will drop and disappear?'

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness
Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe!—forthlooking
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
Thou, too, art gone before; but why
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
Should frail survivors heave a sigh?

1835.

MEMORIES OF CAMBRIDGE.

FROM my pillow, looking forth by light
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
The antechapel where the statue stood
Of Newton, with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind forever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

I could not print
Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps
Of generations of illustrious men,
Unmoved. I could not lightly pass
Through the same gateways, sleep where they had slept,
Wake where they waked, range that enclosure old,
That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.

I laughed with Chaucer in the hawthorn shade;
Heard him, while birds were warbling, tell his tales
Of amorous passion. And that gentle bard
Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State—
Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven
With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,
I called him brother, Englishman and friend!
Yea, our blind poet, who in his later day,
Stood almost single; uttering odious truth,—
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,—
I seemed to see him here
Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
Bounding before me.

Prelude. Book III.

TO HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

SIX YEARS OLD.

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;

Thou faery voyager! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed vision! happy child!
That art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;
And grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
Oh! too industrious folly!
Oh! vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?
Thou art a dewdrop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks;
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

1802.

EVENING VOLUNTARIES.

I.

CALM is the fragrant air, and loath to lose
Day's grateful warmth, though moist with falling dews.
Look for the stars, you'll say that there are none;
Look up a second time, and, one by one,
You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
And wonder how they could elude the sight!
The birds of late so noisy in their bowers,
Warbled a while with faint and fainter powers,
But now are silent as the dim-seen flowers. . .

A stream is heard, I see it not, but know
By its soft music whence the waters flow:
Wheels and the tread of hoofs are heard no more;
One boat there was, but it will touch the shore
With the next dipping of its slackened oar;
Faint sound, that, for the gayest of the gay,
Might give to serious thoughts a moment's sway,
As a last token of man's toilsome day!

1832.

II.

ON A HIGH PART OF THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND (EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 7), THE AUTHOR'S SIXTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY.

THE sun, that seemed so mildly to retire,
Flung back from distant climes a streaming fire.
Whose blaze is now subdued to tender gleams,
Prelude of night's approach with soothing dreams.
Look round—of all the clouds not one is moving;
'Tis the still hour of thinking, feeling, loving.
Silent and steadfast as the vaulted sky,
The boundless plain of waters seems to lie:
Comes that low sound from breezes rustling o'er
The grass-crowned headland that conceals the shore?
No; 'tis the earth-voice of the mighty sea,
Whispering how meek and gentle he *can* be!

Thou Power Supreme! who, arming to rebuke
Offenders, dost put off the gracious look,
And clothe thyself with terrors like the flood
Of ocean roused into his fiercest mood,
Whatever discipline thy Will ordain
For the brief course that must for me remain,
Teach me with quick-eared spirit to rejoice
In admonitions of thy softest voice!
Whate'er the path these mortal feet may trace,
Breathe through my soul the blessing of thy grace,
Glad, through a perfect love, a faith sincere,
Drawn from the wisdom that begins with fear;
Glad to expand; and, for a season, free
From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee!

1833.

III.

NOT in the lucid intervals of life
That come but as a curse to party strife;
Not in some hour when Pleasure with a sigh
Of languor puts his rosy garland by;
Not in the breathing-times of that poor slave
Who daily piles up wealth in Mammon's cave—
Is Nature felt, or can be; nor do words,
Which practised talent readily affords,
Prove that her hand has touched responsive chords;
Nor has her gentle beauty power to move
With genuine rapture and with fervent love
The soul of Genius, if he dare to take
Life's rule from passion craved for passion's sake;
Untaught that meekness is the cherished bent
Of all the truly great and all the innocent.
But who *is* innocent? By grace divine—
Not otherwise, O Nature!—we are thine,
Through good and evil thine, in just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy.
To all that earth from pensive heart is stealing,
And heaven is now to gladdened eyes revealing,
Add every charm the universe can show
Through every change its aspects undergo—
Care may be respited, but not repealed;
No perfect cure grows on that bounded field.
Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the peace,
If He through whom alone our conflicts cease,
Our virtuous hopes without relapse advance,
Come not to speed the soul's deliverance;
To the distempered intellect refuse
His gracious help, or give what we abuse.

1834.

DEVOTIONAL INCITEMENTS.

"Not to the earth confined,
Ascend to heaven."

WHERE will they stop, those breathing Powers,
The spirits of the new-born flowers?
They wander with the breeze, they wind
Where'er the streams a passage find;
Up from their native ground they rise
In mute aerial harmonies;

From humble violet, modest thyme,
Exhaled, the essential odours climb,
As if no space below the sky
Their subtle flight could satisfy:
Heaven will not tax our thoughts with pride
If like ambition be *their* guide.

Roused by this kindliest of May showers,
The spirit-quickener of the flowers,
That with moist virtue softly cleaves
The buds, and freshens the young leaves,
The birds pour forth their souls in notes
Of rapture from a thousand throats—
Here checked by too impetuous haste,
While there the music runs to waste,
With bounty more and more enlarged,
Till the whole air is overcharged;
Give ear, O Man! to their appeal,
And thirst for no inferior zeal,
Thou, who canst *think* as well as feel.

Mount from the earth; aspire! aspire!
So pleads the town's cathedral quire,
In strains that from their solemn height
Sink, to attain a loftier flight;
While incense from the altar breathes
Rich fragrance in embodied wreaths;
Or, flung from swinging censer, shrouds
The taper-lights, and curls in clouds
Around angelic forms, the still
Creation of the painter's skill,
That on the service wait concealed
One moment, and the next revealed.
—Cast off your bonds, awake, arise,
And for no transient ecstasies!
What else can mean the visual plea
Of still or moving imagery—
The iterated summons loud,
Not wasted on the attendant crowd,
Nor wholly lost upon the throng
Hurrying the busy streets along?

Alas! the sanctities combined
By art to unsensualise the mind,
Decay and languish; or, as creeds
And humours change, are spurned like weeds;

The priests are from their altars thrust;
Temples are levelled with the dust;
And solemn rites and awful forms
Founder amid fanatic storms.
Yet evermore, through years renewed
In undisturbed vicissitude
Of seasons balancing their flight
On the swift wings of day and night,
Kind Nature keeps a heavenly door
Wide open for the scattered poor.
Where flower-breathed incense to the skies
Is wafted in mute harmonies;
And ground fresh-cloven by the plough
Is fragrant with a humbler vow;
Where birds and brooks from leafy dells
Chime forth unwearied canticles,
And vapours magnify and spread
The glory of the sun's bright head—
Still constant in her worship, still
Conforming to the Eternal Will,
Whether men sow or reap the fields,
Divine monition Nature yields,
That not by bread alone we live,
Or what a hand of flesh can give;
That every day should leave some part
Free for a sabbath of the heart;
So shall the seventh be truly blest,
From morn to eve with hallowed rest.

1832.

INSCRIPTIONS.

[Supposed to be found in and near a hermit's cell.]

I.

HOPES what are they? Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass:
Or a spider's web adorning
In a straight and treacherous pass.

What are fears but voices airy?
Whisperings where harm is not:
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot!

What is glory? in the socket
See how dying tapers fare!
What is pride?—A whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star.

What is friendship?—do not trust her,
Nor the vow which she has made;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth?—a staff rejected;
Duty?—an unwelcome clog;
Joy?—A moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog;

Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the traveller's eye it shone:
He hath hailed it reappearing—
And as quickly it is gone;

Such is joy—as quickly hidden,
Or misshapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.

What is youth?—a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before!)
Age?—a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.

What is peace?—When pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sight discover
That precedes the passing knell!

1818.

II.

Hast thou seen, with flash incessant,
Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
No one knows by what device?

Such are thoughts—A wind-swept meadow
Mimicking a troubled sea,
Such is life; and death a shadow
From the rock eternity!

1818.

III.

Troubled long with warring notions,
Long impatient of thy rod,
I resign my soul's emotions,
Unto Thee, mysterious God!

What avails the kindly shelter
Yielded by this craggy rent,
If my spirit toss and welter,
On the waves of discontent?

Parching Summer hath no warrant
To consume this crystal Well;
Rains, that make each rill a torrent,
Neither sully it nor swell.

Thus, dishonouring not her station,
Would my Life present to thee,
Gracious God, the poor oblation
Of divine tranquillity!

1818.

IV.

Not seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the morn;
Not seldom evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,
To the confiding bark untrue;
And, if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous oak, in pomp outspread
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die;
Thy smile is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify!

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on suppliant knee;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstacy!

1818.

STRAY SELECTIONS.

I.

TO A CHILD.

SMALL service is true service while it lasts!
Of humblest friends, bright creature, scorn not one,
The Daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dew-drop from the Sun.

1834.

II.

"MY HEART LEAPS UP."

MY heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The child is father of the man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

1802.

III.

TO A YOUNG LADY

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY.

DEAR child of Nature, let them rail!
There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold,
Where thou, a wife and friend, shalt see
Thy own delightful days, and be
A light to young and old.

There healthy as a shepherd-boy,
And treading among flowers of joy
Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when gray hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

1805.

IV.

FROM THE TABLES TURNED.

SWEET is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things:
We murder to dissect.

Enough of science and of art;
Close up these barren leaves:
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

1798.

V.

FROM EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY.

THE eye, it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

Nor less I deem that there are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?



"SWIFTLY TURN THE MURMURING WHEEL."
—*Page* 335.

Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
  Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old gray stone
  And dream my time away.

1798.

VI.

TO LADY FLEMING.

LIVES there a man whose sole delights
  Are trivial pomp and city noise,
Hardening a heart that loathes or slights
  What every natural heart enjoys?
Who never caught a noontide dream
From murmur of a running stream;
Could strip, for aught the prospects yields
To him, their verdure from the fields;
And take the radiance from the clouds
In which the sun his setting shrouds.

A soul so pitiably forlorn
  If such do on this earth abide,
May season apathy with scorn,
  May turn indifference to pride;
And still be not unblest, compared
With him who grovels, self-debarred
From all that lies within the scope
Of holy faith and Christian hope;
Yea, strives for others to bedim
The glorious light too pure for him.

1823.

VII.

SONG FOR THE SPINNING WHEEL.

SWIFTLY turn the murmuring wheel!
  Night has brought the welcome hour,
When the weary fingers feel
  Help, as if from faery power;
Dewy night o'ershades the ground:
Turn the swift wheel round and round!

Now, beneath the starry sky,
  Couch the widely-scattered sheep;—
Ply the pleasant labour, ply!
  For the spindle, while they sleep,
Runs with speed more smooth and fine,
Gathering up a trustier line.

Short-lived likings may be bred
By a glance from fickle eyes;
But true love is like the thread
Which the kindly wool supplies,
When the flocks are all at rest
Sleeping on the mountain's breast.

1812.

VIII.

A NIGHT-PIECE.

THE sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the moon,
Which through that vale is indistinctly seen,
A dull contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground, from rock, plant, tree or tower.
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up,—the clouds are split
Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small,
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drives as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent; still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturb'd by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

1798.

IX.

THE MOON.

YES, lovely moon! if thou so mildly bright
Dost rouse, yet surely in thy own despite,
To fiercer mood the phrensy-stricken brain,
Let me a compensating faith maintain,

That there's a sensitive, a tender, part
Which thou canst touch in every human heart,
For healing and composure.

1835.

X.

THE ECHO.

(*From "Lines to Johanna."*)

. . . Johanna laughed aloud. . .
The rock like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the lady's voice, and laughed again;
That ancient woman seated on Helm-crag
Was ready with her cavern; Hammer-scar
And the tall steep of Silver-how, sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone;
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the lady's voice, old Skiddaw blew
His speaking trumpet; back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.

1800.

STRAY LINES FROM DIFFERENT POEMS.

The sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.

—*To Johanna.*

Thou in the dear love of some one Friend
Hast been so happy that thou know'st what thoughts
Will sometimes in the happiness of Love
Make the heart sink.

—*Inscription for the Hermitage.*

Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
Consul or King, can sound himself to know
The destiny of man, and live in hope.

—*Calais, 1802.*

Oh! there is life that breathes not; Powers there are
That touch each other to the quick in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of.

—*Kilchurn Castle.*

The immortal mind craves objects that endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.
—*Those Words Were Uttered.*

Though nature's dread protection fails
There is a bulwark in the soul.
—*And Is It Among Rude Untutored Dales.*

We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death:—else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality?
—*O'er the Wide Earth.*

The fairest, brightest hues of ether fade;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die.
—*The Fairest Hues.*

I have risen, uplifted, on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.
—*The Fairest Hues.*

Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!
Not dull art thou as undiscerning night;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions.
—*Hail, Twilight.*

Weak spirits are there—who would ask
Upon the pressure of a painful thing,
The lion's sinews, or the eagle's wing.
—*Ode, 1816.*

Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs time, space, and number,
Look thou to Eternity!
—*The Longest Day.*

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While youth's roses are thy crown.
—*The Longest Day.*

Thus when thou with Time hast travelled
Toward the mighty gulf of things,
And in the mazy stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings;
Think if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that stay,
Did not virtue give the meanest
Charms superior to decay.

—*The Longest Day.*

The dew,—the storm,—
Did alike proceed
From the same gracious will, were both an offspring
Of bounty infinite.

—*Musings Near Aquapendente.*

The cuckoo, wandering in solitude, and evermore
Foretelling and proclaiming, . . .
Voice of the desert, fare-thee-well, sweet bird.

—*The Cuckoo at Laverna.*

For there are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

—*Ruth.*

Pure hopes of high intent.

—*Ruth.*

The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favoured bowers.

—*Ruth.*

God who made the great book of the world.

—*The Brothers.*

I almost received her heart into my own.

—*The Pet Lamb.*

Say, what is Honour?—'Tis the finest sense
Of justice which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done.

—*Say, What is Honour?*

And the realised vision is clasped to my heart.

—*At Vallambrosa.*

Vain is the glory of the sky,
The beauty vain of field and grove,
Unless, while with admiring eye
We gaze, we also learn to love.
—*Glad Sight.*

Thou wilt salute old memories as they throng
Into thy heart; and fancies, running wild
Through fresh green fields, and budding groves among,
Will make thee happy, happy as a child:
Of sunshine wilt thou think, and flowers and song,
And breathe as in a world where nothing can go wrong.
—*The Cuckoo Clock.*

For who what is shall measure by what seems
To be, or not to be,
Or tax high Heaven with prodigality?
—*The Unremitting Voice.*

Action is transitory,—a step, a blow—
The action of a muscle, this way or that.
—*The Borderers.*

The child is father of the man.
—*My Heart Leaps Up.*

Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.
—*To a Butterfly.*

A Briton, even in love, should be
A subject, not a slave!
—*Ere with Cold Beads of Midnight Dew.*

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,
Whose veil is unremoved
Till heart with heart in concord beats,
And the lover is beloved.
—*To* ——

Minds that have nothing to confer
Find little to perceive.
—*Yes, Thou Art Fair.*

Why art thou silent! Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
—*Why Art Thou Silent.*

Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant
Bound to thy service with unceasing care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For naught but what thy happiness could spare.
—*Why Art Thou Silent.*

Something between a hindrance and a help.
—*Michael.*

But he is oft the wisest man
Who is not wise at all.
—*The Oak and the Broom.*

A youth to whom was given
So much of earth, so much of heaven.
—*Ruth.*

Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.
—*Hart-leap Well.*

A Primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more.
—*Peter Bell.*

The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky.
—*Peter Bell.*

As if the man had fixed his face
In many a solitary place
Against the wind and open sky.
—*Peter Bell.*

Tutored for Eternity.
—*To Lady Fleming.*

Then be assured
That least of all can aught—that ever owned
The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime
Which man is born to—sink, howe'er depressed,
So low as to be scorned without a sin.
—*Old Cumberland Beggar.*

Long have I loved what I behold,
The night that calms, the day that cheers;
The common-growth of Mother-earth
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.
—*Peter Bell.*

Such delight I found
To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower
That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force
Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
—*To Johanna.*

Gone from this world of earth, air, sea, and sky,
From all its spirit, moving imagery,
Intensely studied with a painter's eye,
A poet's heart.
—*Elegiac Musings.*

The primal flight
Of the poetic ecstasy
Into the land of mystery.
—*Oft Have I Caught.*

O Nightingale! Who ever heard thy song
Might here be moved, till Fancy grows so strong
That listening sense is pardonably cheated
Where wood or stream by thee was never greeted.
—*By the Side of Rydal Mere.*

What are helps of time and place,
When Wisdom stands in need of Nature's grace;
Why do good thoughts, invoked or not, descend
Like Angels from their bowers, our virtues to befriend.
—*Soft as a Cloud.*

Plain living and high thinking are no more,
—*Sonnet. London, 1802.*

Tears to human suffering are due:
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man.
—*Laodamia.*

Soft is the music that would charm forever,
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.
—*Sonnet.*

How does the meadow-flower in its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and in that freedom, bold.
—*Sonnet.*

The best of what we do and are,
Just God, forgive!
—*Thoughts on the Banks of Nith.*

Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.
—*The Venetian Republic.*

The feather whence the pen
Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men,
Dropped from an angel's wing.
—*Ecclesiastical Sonnets.*

The tender charm of poetry and love.
—*At Mosgiel.*

Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.
—*The Tables Turned.*

You would find
A tale in everything.
—*Simon Lee.*

I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.
—*Simon Lee.*

Yet sometimes when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round,
It seemed as if he drank it up,
He felt with spirit so profound.
—*Matthew.*

Whence can comfort spring
When prayer is of no avail?
—*Force of Prayer.*

But hushed be every thought that springs
From out the bitterness of things.
—*To Sir George Beaumont.*

Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach.
—*The Cumberland Beggar.*

One that would peep and botanise
Upon his mother's grave.
—*Poet's Epitaph.*

STRAY BEAUTIES FROM THE PRELUDE.

Those recollected hours that have the charm
Of visionary things, those lovely forms
And sweet sensations that throw back our life,
And almost make remotest infancy
A visible scene, on which the sun is shining.
—*Book I.*

Tell,—how Wallace fought for Scotland; left the name
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country; left the deeds
Of Wallace like a family of ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty.
—*Book I.*

The fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song
. . . and sent a voice
That flowed along my dreams.
—*Book I.*

Blest the babe,
Nursed in his mother's arms, who sinks to sleep
Rocked on his mother's breast; who with his soul
Drinks in the feelings of his mother's eye!
For him, in one dear presence, there exists
A virtue which irradiates and exalts
Objects through widest intercourse of sense,
No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:
Along his infant veins are interfused
The gravitation and the filial bond
Of nature that connect him with the world.
Is there a flower, to which he points with hand
Too weak to gather it, already love
Drawn from love's purest earthly fount for him

Hath beautified that flower; already shades
Of pity cast from inward tenderness
Do fall around him upon aught that bears
Unsightly marks of violence or harm.
—*Book II.*

Society made sweet as solitude
By silent unobtrusive sympathies,
And gentle agitations of the mind
From manifold distinctions, difference
Perceived in things, where to the unwatchful eye
No difference is, and hence from the same source
Sublimer joy.
—*Book II.*

When from our better selves we have too long
Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop
Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
How gracious, how benign is solitude!
—*Book IV.*

Thou also, Man, hast wrought
Things that aspire to unconquerable life.
—*Book V.*

Oh! why hath not the Mind
Some element to stamp her image on
In nature somewhat nearer to her own?
Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad
Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?
—*Book V.*

(Long)
Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
By sorrow not unsmitten; yet for me
Life's morning radiance hath not left the hills,
Her dew is on the flowers.
—*Book VI.*

I drew
A pleasure quiet and profound, a sense
Of permanent and universal sway
And paramount belief, there recognised
A type, for finite natures of the one
Supreme Existence, the surpassing Life,
Which, to the boundaries of space and time,
Of melancholy space and doleful time,
Superior and incapable of change,
Nor touched by welterings of passion—is
And hath the name of, God. —*Book VI.*

Whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort and expectation and desire,
And something evermore about to be.
—*Book VI.*

There is no grief, no sorrow, no despair,
No languor, no dejection, no dismay,
No absence scarcely can there be, for those
Who love as we do.
—*Book VI.*

Things that are, are not,
As the mind answers to them, or the heart
Is prompt or slow, to feel.
—*Book VII.*

The peace that comes with night; the deep solemnity
Of nature's intermediate hours of rest,
When the great tide of human life stands still.
—*Book VII.*

The face of every one
That passes by me is a mystery!
Thus have I looked, nor ceased to look, oppressed
By thoughts of what and whither, when and how,
Until the shapes before my eyes became
A second-sight procession, such as glides
Over still mountains or appears in dreams.
—*Book VII.*

To him who looks
In steadiness, who hath among least things
An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts
As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.
—*Book VII.*

And so we all of us in some degree
Are led to knowledge, wheresoever led,
And howsoever; were it otherwise,
And we found evil fast as we find good,
In our first years, or think that it is found,
How could the innocent heart bear up and live!
—*Book VIII.*

Man and his noble nature, as it is
The gift which God has placed within his power,
His blind desires and steady faculties
Capable of clear truth, the one to break
Bondage, the other to build liberty
On firm foundations. —*Book IX.*

The tide retreats
But to return out of his hiding-place
In the great deep; all things have second birth.
—*Book X.*

Heaven's best aid is wasted upon men
Who to themselves are false.
—*Book X.*

Man is only weak through his mistrust
And want of hope where evidence divine
Proclaims to him that hope should be most sure.
—*Book X.*

A mind whose rest
Is where it ought to be, in self-restraint,
In circumspection and simplicity,
Falls rarely in entire discomfiture
Below its aim, or meets with, from without,
A treachery that foils it or defeats.
—*Book X.*

If from the affliction somewhere do not grow
Honour which could not else have been, a faith,
An elevation, and a sanctity,
If new strength be not given nor old restored,
The blame is ours, not Nature's.
—*Book X.*

There is
One great society alone on earth:
The noble Living and the noble Dead.
—*Book XI.*

So feeling comes in aid
Of feeling, and diversity of strength
Attends us, if but once we have been strong.
—*Book XII.*

Thou must give
Else never canst receive.
—*Book XII.*

SELECTION FROM THE ODE ON PRINCE ALBERT.

[Written after being appointed Laureate.]

ALBERT, in thy race we cherish
A Nation's strength that will not perish
  While England's sceptred line
True to the King of Kings is found;
  Like that wise ancestor of thine
Who threw the Saxon shield o'er Luther's life
When first above the yells of bigot strife
  The trumpet of the Living Word
Assumed a voice of deep portentous sound,
  From gladdened Elbe to startled Tiber heard.

. . . . .

What shield more sublime
  E'er was blazoned or sung?
And the Prince whom we greet
  From its hero is sprung.
Resound, resound the strain
  That hails him for our own!
Again, and yet again,
  For the Church, the State, the Throne,
And that presence fair and bright,
  Ever blest wherever seen,
Who deigns to grace our festal rite,
  The pride of the islands, VICTORIA THE QUEEN.

1847.


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